

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY
IN THE
CLAIR DE LUNE

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FRANKIE & JOHNNY
IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

A Greyhound bus is barreling through Pennsylvania's countryside. OPENING TITLES BEGIN.

CUT TO:

A WOMAN

inside the bus. She looks out the window. Her mind is elsewhere. Her name is FRANKIE. She's attractive but her wardrobe and hair seem to indicate someone who does not consider herself special.

CUT TO:

HIGHWAY EXIT SIGN

It reads: PENNSYLVANIA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION.
Frankie's bus thunders by.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATE PRISON - DAY

A group of people waiting for prisoners to be released. There are single men, women and entire families.

CLOSE ON A SEXY, LATE-TWENTIES WOMAN

~~She leans against her car smoking. She looks at her~~
watch. Her name is PENNY. She's cocky.

CUT TO:

THE GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

It is still speeding along the highway.

CUT TO:

FRANKIE

She has fallen asleep with an open People magazine in her lap.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Prisoners (in street clothes) are being released. Two MEN come out and turn back to the releasing guard. They seem to be executing a pre-arranged plan.

LES

Hey, Delaney!

Guard looks. They drop their pants, mooning the guard, then quickly pull up their pants and walk away. Half the crowd missed it. Others look at them oddly. They walk, laughing, toward the girl, Penny.

Penny waves when she sees it's her man. His name is LES. His friend's name is JOHNNY. They both carry small bags with their belongings. Les sweeps Penny up and swings her around in a happy embrace while Johnny stands patiently to one side.

MED. SHOT

Les introduces his friend to Penny, who doesn't look too pleased. They get into the car, Penny driving, Les up front and Johnny in the back. As they do this:

PENNY

(to Johnny)

Okay, I'll drop you off. After that you're on your own. He didn't tell me we were giving you a ride. He never tells me nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLENTOWN, PA. BUS DEPOT - DAY

The bus is pulling into the depot. SHOT of Frankie putting on makeup as the bus slides into its dock.

~~EXT. ALLENTOWN, PA. BUS DEPOT - DAY~~ ~~CUT TO:~~

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Penny's car barrels TOWARD US. SHOT of highway mileage sign as Penny's car races by. It reads: NEW YORK CITY 250 MILES.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Penny is driving. Les is next to her in the front seat working on a joint. Johnny is in the back seat looking at job want ads in a newspaper. Penny is looking at him through her rearview mirror.

PENNY

Les says it was your first time.

LES

(laughs)

He thinks it's gonna be his last.

PENNY

Don't listen to him, Johnny.

She hits Les on the arm. Les whacks her back. He turns towards Johnny in the back seat and offers him a toke.

PENNY (cont'd)

God, if he weren't so good-looking I would throw him right out of this car. I hate men who get by on their looks.

Penny is probably the only woman in the world, with the exception of Les' mother, who thinks Les is good-looking. Penny takes the joint from Les, who has noticed that Johnny didn't take any.

LES

What's the matter?

JOHNNY

Nothing. I made a few decisions back there. That was one of them. It gets me into trouble.

LES

Bullshit. This is what gets a man into trouble. Bitches.

Penny hits him on the arm again, harder this time.

LES (cont'd)

(grinning broadly)

She loves me.

~~CLOSE on Johnny watching them. He looks back to the newspaper.~~

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A christening is in progress. A BABY is HOWLING lustily. It is difficult to hear the MINISTER over him. The christening party is no more than a dozen-or-so simply, but neatly, dressed working-class people. The woman holding the baby is Frankie, who is the baby's godmother. Standing next to her at the altar is the baby's godfather. His name is PAUL. The baby's parents, MIKE and TONI KAISER, old high school friends of Frankie and Paul, stand just beside them, surrounded by their other children, who are in various stages of misbehavior.

SHOT of FRANKIE'S MOTHER in front row of the baptismal party just looking at her daughter holding the baby.

SHOT of Frankie holding the baby awkwardly.

The Minister motions to Frankie to hold the baby over the baptismal font. Paul tries to help.

CLOSE ON BABY

HOWLING LOUDER than ever.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLENTOWN STREET - LATER IN DAY

The baptismal party is walking along a suburban street. All the houses look pretty much the same. Frankie is walking with Paul. Mike and Toni Kaiser are walking with their children, who are tearing all over the place.

Frankie's Mother is with a few FRIENDS, elderly women her age. All eyes are on Frankie. They have been all day long.

FRIEND OF FRANKIE'S MOTHER

She and Paul make a nice couple.

FRANKIE'S MOTHER

Don't start, Mrs. Gianini!

CUT TO:

FRANKIE AND PAUL

walking along. They are at the head of the "procession."

FRANKIE

~~Wasn't that where Larry Scibinski lived?~~ Wasn't that where Larry Scibinski lived?

PAUL

They still do.

FRANKIE

I thought he was the cutest boy in the twelfth grade.

PAUL

I thought I was!

FRANKIE

No, you were the handsomest. Larry Scibinski was the cutest.

Mike and Toni are walking just behind them.

TONI

You should see Larry now, Frankie. He's gross! No hair, gut hanging over his belt.

FRANKIE

No, stop, I don't want to know!

TONI

I won't even buy gas there, I get so depressed.

CUT TO:

INT. TONI AND MIKE'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Everyone from the christening is crowded into the smallish living room. People are balancing coffee cups and plates with apple pie. Frankie, Paul, Toni and Mike are finishing up a cheer they used when they were together in high school.

ALL

Rah, rah, rah, Moody. Yeeaaa.

The quartet leaps into the air. Everybody claps.

PAUL

Hey, we're not finished until Frankie does her split. Remember? Both legs flat on the ground.

FRANKIE

That was a few years ago. This is my split now.

Frankie holds up her arms like she's going to execute a fabulous split but only takes a half step forward. Everybody laughs. Frankie goes to her mother.

~~FRANKIE'S MOTHER~~ FRANKIE (cont'd)

Can we go now?

FRANKIE'S MOTHER

Tell her this is what real life is like, Paul. This is how people live, Frankie. Real people.

PAUL

Some real people. What time is your bus?

FRANKIE

Late. I wanted to spend some time with her.

FRANKIE'S MOTHER

Now it's all my fault.

FRANKIE

Meaning's your fault!

PAUL

I gotta get back. I have the kids
Sundays. It's Melissa's birthday.

FRANKIE

Don't tell me how old she is.

PAUL

Only twelve.

FRANKIE

Only twelve! She was this big the
last time I saw her!

PAUL

You know what they say: time flies.

FRANKIE

It was great seeing you.

PAUL

You, too, Frankie. If you're ever
in Pittsburgh...!

FRANKIE

If you're ever in New York...!

PAUL

Wild horses couldn't get me there.

FRANKIE'S MOTHER

Me either. I don't know what
she's doing there and I have a
feeling I don't want to know.

~~SHOT of Frankie reacting to this uncalled-for editorial comment.~~

CUT TO:

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

Johnny and Penny sit at a booth, finishing their coffee
and pie. Les's place is empty.

PENNY

How much was it?

JOHNNY

Three thousand, four hundred and
ninety-two dollars and sixty-four
cents.

PENNY

That's chicken feed! It pisses me
off, our courts.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

Small fry like you and Les get sent up and those suit-and-tie types get off scot-free. You know how much Les had on him? One-tenth of an ounce. That's not possession, it's a joke!

Johnny looks at his watch and signals for a check.

PENNY (cont'd)

You got someone waiting for you?

JOHNNY

Not anymore.

PENNY

You will. You're a good-looking guy. I'll fix you up with my cousin. She works in a beauty parlor in Jersey City.

JOHNNY

We'll see.

PENNY

Most guys come out of the slammer, they forget what a woman's ass looks like.

Les ENTERS SHOT on his way back from men's room, still pulling up his fly.

LES

Two bits she's trying to set you
~~up with her cousin. She's a dog.~~

PENNY

That didn't stop you.

LES

I'd fuck mud! Look at you!

Again he laughs uproariously at his own joke. Penny joins in again and leans against him affectionately. At the same time, Les deftly pockets the waitress's tip from the next table.

CLOSE on Johnny seeing this.

LES

What? Come on, lighten up. We're out!

SHOT of Les and Penny at the counter paying the bill.

SHOT of Johnny putting down another tip for the waitress.

SHOT of Les looking back at Johnny and shaking his head, scowling.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Frankie is washing up after dinner. Her Mother sits at the linoleum-covered kitchen table.

FRANKIE'S MOTHER

I worry about you, baby, that's all.

FRANKIE

I'm fine, Ma. Where do these bowls go?

FRANKIE'S MOTHER

Up there. Would you tell me if you weren't fine?

FRANKIE

Probably not. Up where? I'm kidding, I'm kidding.

Frankie goes to her Mother and hugs her close, she is still holding the bowl.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Ma, maybe I'm not the happiest person who ever lived but that's not your fault. I swear to God, it's not. It's not even mine.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS STATION IN ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA - NIGHT

Frankie enters the waiting room carrying a small suitcase. We FOLLOW her to platform where a bus marked "New York City" is boarding to take her back.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN HEIGHTS ESPLANADE - TWILIGHT

Johnny is looking at the skyline of Manhattan across from him. He still has his small travel bag with him. He looks greedily at the vista before him, happily drinking it all in.

SHOT of Manhattan skyline. It is that time of day when it is at its most beautiful, most magical. Who wouldn't want to live here.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The bus is barreling TOWARDS US.

Its headlights pick up the same highway exit sign we saw earlier: Pennsylvania Correctional Institute. The bus hurtles by. The sign grows dark.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Frankie is looking out the window, only now she is crying softly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - SHOT OF FRANKIE'S BUS - DAWN

making its approach to the Holland Tunnel with a wonderful view of Manhattan bathed in the sunrise just across the Hudson River.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Frankie comes out of the terminal carrying her small suitcase. There is a line of taxicabs. Frankie looks at her watch and decides to walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIDEO APPLIANCES STORE - DAY

Frankie has stopped to check out the display of VCR's in the window. She's very interested.

CUT TO

EXT. ANOTHER VIDEO APPLIANCES STORE - DAY

Frankie is again looking at the VCR's in the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE APOLLO RESTAURANT - DAY

HELEN, an elderly waitress, is being helped out of the restaurant by NICK, the owner. She has put a coat on over her uniform. Nick is hailing a cab for her when Frankie ENTERS SHOT.

FRANKIE

Helen!

HELEN:

I'm fine. He's making me go home.

NICK

Twice in one week she's had a
dizzy spell! Taxi!

A cab stops for him.

HELEN

It's that medication they've got
me on. I'm fine.

Nick and Frankie are helping her into the taxi. Nick
gives driver a \$10.

FRANKIE

I'll call you this afternoon.

HELEN

The woman at table seven stiffed
me last week.

FRANKIE

Thanks for telling me.

NICK

Go home, Helen.

He closes the taxi door.

HELEN

I'm fine.

The cab pulls away.

CLOSE ON FRANKIE AND NICK

~~HELEN IS LOOKING AFTER HIM. SHE IS SITTING IN THE TAXI. SHE IS WAITING FOR HIM. SHE IS LOOKING AFTER HIM. SHE IS SITTING IN THE TAXI. SHE IS WAITING FOR HIM.~~

CUT TO:

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - DAY

The room is cluttered with papers. Bureaucracy
rampant. Johnny sits being interviewed by a thoroughly
disinterested woman, MS. STOUT, who will use a tooth-
pick to get rid of her lunch during most of the follow-
ing. People like Ms. Stout have all the power in a
situation like this. They can afford to be disgust-
ing. They probably enjoy it.

Ms. Stout is poring over Johnny's files. Johnny has
the employment want ads in the newspaper with him.

MS. STOUT

Unh-unh... yes... no...
figures... No smoking!

Johnny's hand has gone to his breast pocket.

JOHNNY

I don't smoke. I was getting a
breath mint.

MS. STOUT

No mints!

JOHNNY

Okay.

MS. STOUT

So they taught you to cook. What
cuisine?

JOHNNY

No cuisine. Straight short order.

MS. STOUT

You should have learned Chinese.
I like Chinese. Everyone likes
Chinese. Foods today are all
fad. Chinese is not a fad.

JOHNNY

I'll remember that.

MS. STOUT

You're a wiseguy.

JOHNNY

Thank you.

MS. STOUT

It wasn't a compliment.

She hands him an I.D. card.

MS. STOUT (cont'd)

Give this to your employer.

JOHNNY

When I find one!

MS. STOUT

I was going to say that. When you
find one.

JOHNNY

I speak before I think.

MS. STOUT

That can get you into a lot of
trouble.

JOHNNY

It already has. But not anymore.

MS. STOUT

That's what they all say. Have him call me.

JOHNNY

Or her. It could be a woman. Women own restaurants.

MS. STOUT

Have your landlord call me, him or her. I'll see you next week, same time.

JOHNNY

(joking)

That you will, Ms. Stout, that you will. I've paid my debt to society. I'm going to play ball with you guys this time.

MS. STOUT

What happened last time?

JOHNNY

I didn't like the rules.

MS. STOUT

Well, now you know.

JOHNNY

I still don't like the rules.

He pockets his I.D. card and goes.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A raw egg is cracked into a hot skillet and begins to FRY. SOUNDS of a noisy, active restaurant all around. PULL BACK to reveal TINO, young, good looking, nice build and big moustache, is cooking up a storm. He has about ten different orders going. Working with him is JORGE, thin, late teens, thoroughly disinterested in his job. In the same general area is LUTHER, a man in his early 60's. Luther is the dishwasher. The level of NOISE in the Apollo kitchen is very high.

TINO

So I say to her, "Alexis, what do you want from me? I'm only one man."

Jorge is smearing butter on toast in great gobs.

TINO (cont'd)

Not so much butter. I tell you this much? Why you use that much?

He pushes Jorge aside and butters the toast himself.
Jorge uses this opportunity to excuse himself.

JORGE
I gotta make a call.

He goes to phone on wall near where Luther is spraying
a rack of dishes with hot water.

LUTHER
Now don't go tying that thing up.

JORGE
Who'd call you?

LUTHER
You'd be surprised.

CUT TO:

NEDDA

mid-50's, thin as a rail, eyes blazing, at the service
window which separates the restaurant proper from the
kitchen. She is returning an order.

NEDDA
My customer told me no butter. I
told you no butter. So why is
there butter?

CUT BACK TO:

TINO

taking the offending order back through the service
window from Nedda. He takes a towel, dabs the butter
off and shoves the plate back to Nedda.

TINO
This ain't the Four Seasons.

NEDDA
This ain't even the Two Seasons!

CUT TO:

GRACE

a black waitress, wearing glasses, joining Nedda at the
service window.

GRACE
I need eggs over easy, crisp bacon
and a gun. I'm gonna shoot that
bitch in seven.

NEDDA

I like your hair like that.

Frankie joins them at the service window. She has changed into her waitress' uniform.

FRANKIE

I need scrambled with sausage,
home fries and a side of rye.

GRACE

How was your weekend?

FRANKIE

Great. I like your hair like that.

NEDDA

That's just what I was telling her.

GRACE

You don't think it's too young?

NEDDA

Honey, there's no such thing!

SHOT of Jorge talking on the wall phone in the kitchen.

JORGE

Oh, baby, you're so smooth all
over. I like a chick like that.

CUT TO:

FRANKIE

~~Frankie is~~ watching Jorge through the service window.

FRANKIE

(smiles)

Jorge! Hide! Immigration!

Jorge turns and gives her the finger, but a Latino at one of the tables leaves hurriedly.

INT. RESTAURANT AT CASH REGISTER - DAY

ARTEMIS, the owner's niece, sits at the cash register. She is young and very pretty. Nick, the owner of the Apollo Restaurant, is talking her ear off. He is being solicitous as only an uncle who has entrusted his beloved cash register to his brother's youngest daughter can be.

NICK

Artemis, you're not listening,
you're daydreaming, now listen.
This is important.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

When you're making change keep the bill out of the drawer until they've counted it. You know why? Ask me why.

ARTEMIS

Why, Uncle Nick?

NICK

Guys come in here, and not just blacks, they hand you a ten, you give them change for a ten, and then they claim they gave you a twenty. They'll rob you blind in this country if you're not careful.

Johnny enters, he holds a folded newspaper that's opened to the "Help Wanted" section. He walks up to Nick and stands a few beats before Nick notices him.

NICK (cont'd)

You can sit anywhere. We don't have a maitre d'.

JOHNNY

(indicates paper)

It says here you're looking for a short order cook?

NICK

I was looking for a short order cook.

~~JOHNNY~~ JOHNNY

You got someone? Sorry.

Frankie, carrying dirty dishes, squeezes past.

FRANKIE

Excuse me.

She EXITS SHOT.

JOHNNY

How late was I?

NICK

You're not late at all. I been running that ad eight days. You're the first one to come in here. I gave up.

JOHNNY

I'm a terrific cook.

NICK

You got any references?

JOHNNY

It's more like a diploma.

He hands him the papers and his parolee's I.D. we saw in Ms. Stout's office. While Nick studies them, Artemis and Johnny exchange glances. She is clearly taken with him.

ARTEMIS

Welcome to the Apollo.

JOHNNY

Let's hope so. I need this job.

ARTEMIS

I didn't have any references and they hired me.

JOHNNY

You're prettier.

ARTEMIS

It's hard, finding work?

JOHNNY

It's murder. What's that accent?

ARTEMIS

Greek. I'm from Athens.

JOHNNY

That's where the Parthenon is!

ARTEMIS

I know that.

JOHNNY

I'm going to see it in the flesh someday. Well, whatever you see a bunch of old stones in. How long you been here?

ARTEMIS

Six months, two weeks and four days, but I'm not counting.

JOHNNY

Homesick?

ARTEMIS

To death, mister, to death!

Nick moves INTO THE SHOT, Johnny's papers in hand.

NICK

What do you think, pumpkin? You
think I should hire him?

ARTEMIS

Yes.

NICK

Why?

ARTEMIS

I like his face.

NICK

Me, too. You're hired.

JOHNNY

Yeah? Thank you.

NICK

I believe in giving a man another
chance -- close your ears, pumpkin
-- until he fucks up. This
country of yours gave me another
chance -- close your ears, pumpkin
-- I didn't fuck up. This is
between us.

JOHNNY

Thank you. I won't -- close your
ears, pumpkin -- I won't fuck up.

NICK

You can start tomorrow.

JOHNNY

I could start right now.

NICK

You need a place to live.

(he hands Johnny

a card)

He's my fourth cousin. It's a
lousy neighborhood, but it's
cheap. I'll see you 6 a.m.
tomorrow. I'll be here at 5. You
got a name?

JOHNNY

Johnny. You?

NICK

Nick.

JOHNNY

Thank you, Nick. You have made me the happiest of men. And thank you, pumpkin. I bet that's not really your name. It should be.

NICK

This is the boss's niece. This is an eighteen-year-old virgin Greek girl...

ARTEMIS

Uncle Nick!

NICK

... who is going to stay an eighteen-year-old virgin Greek girl.

CORA ENTERS SHOT. Cora is early 20's and something of a "looker." Cora does not plan to be at the Apollo Restaurant very long.

CORA

'Morning, Nick.

She EXITS SHOT.

NICK

And that was Cora.

SHOT of Cora from the back, really swinging it. Cora's walk is as un-liberated as her name.

SHOT of Johnny watching her move. He is not unimpressed.

JOHNNY

Cora, I have a funny feeling, is not an eighteen-year-old virgin Greek girl. See you tomorrow, six a.m.

Johnny exits. He passes PETER, who is just arriving at work. Peter is mid-20's, blond, "cute" in the conventional sense. He gives a verbal fanfare.

PETER

Ta-ta. I'm here!

NICK

Ta-ta. You're late.

PETER

I'm history. Gone.

NICK

You will be.

PETER

(announces for all
to hear)

I sold a script, Nick. They're
flying me to Los Angeles first
class. Your customers are going
to say, "Those same fingers that
touched my BLT typed the highest-
grossing movie in America!" I'm
giving you one last day out of the
goodness of my heart.

Peter EXITS SHOT. For once in his life, Nick is speechless. Other waitresses and customers applaud.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Cora, Peter, Frankie and Nedda are on a break. The restaurant is close to empty. They sit at a table in the back drinking coffee. Tino can be seen through the service window. Behind him, we can see Jorge on the telephone.

FRANKIE

We're all very happy for you, Peter. Just be sure there's parts for all of us.

PETER

I sure picked a great day to waltz in here with great news! God, what a rotten break for Helen.

NEDDA

One of us ought to stop by and see how she is on the way home.

CORA

Do you know where she lives? Rego Park. I have spent my whole life not going to places like Rego Park.

NEDDA

But we don't know how sick she is. At least we should call.

FRANKIE

~~My father died of emphysema.~~

Luther comes out of the kitchen and joins them. He is wearing an undershirt and dirty apron.

FRANKIE

Luther, how old is Helen?

LUTHER

Seventy-four.

FRANKIE

Someone her age shouldn't have to work.

LUTHER

I'm gonna be seventy-two next month.

CORA

No!

SHOT of man at table waving for a waitress. Frankie gets up and EXITS SHOT.

LUTHER

Nick hired someone.

CORA

I hope he's straight.

PETER

Cora is very cynical for a New York City waitress.

CORA

You get on my nerves sometimes. Put it in your script.

PETER

I have. You're all in it. Cora becomes a cruise director. Nedda marries Donald Trump's secret twin brother, Abner.

NEDDA

(to Cora)

Is he Jewish?

PETER

(going on)

Helen wins the lottery and retires to Key West. Frankie, I haven't decided what to do with.

CORA

Just get her a date.

NEDDA

That was unkind, Cora.

CORA

You, Nedda, the bitch, is telling me what's unkind?

PETER

Luther, I've made you a coke-headed lesbian.

LUTHER

That's fine with me.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - UPPER WEST 40'S - NIGHT

Frankie is struggling home carrying the pizza, staples from the deli and her suitcase from the weekend. She passes a group of teenagers clustered around a doorway, smoking, drinking beer.

A group of WOMEN, speaking Spanish, are having a heated conversation. One Woman is the main story-teller, acting it all out with great flair, including the firing of a gun. The others cluck in amazement. There's an outline of the body drawn on the sidewalk by the police.

Kids are Ad LIBBING and pitching pennies at the body outline. The goal is to see who can get the most pennies in the "head". None of the groups of people she passes by pay her the slightest attention. Frankie comes up to the door of her building.

INT. FRANKIE'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Frankie enters and lets the door close behind her.

SHOT of the closed elevator doors. There's an old "Out of Order" sign affixed to them.

Frankie begins climbing the stairs. We FOLLOW her all three flights. There are the SOUNDS of television sets, radios, voices raised -- some in laughter, some in argument. Some apartments have bags of garbage outside their doors. The overall impression is not so much one of squalor as melancholy. Remember, not so many years ago this was home for solid, but thoroughly respectable, low-income workers. The decline has come from the neglect of the owners, not the tenants themselves.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT DOOR - NIGHT

We can hear the loud ROCK MUSIC from inside.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - SHOT OF FRANKIE

coming into the apartment.

FRANKIE

Hello, Tim. It's me.

She reacts as a head of a young man looks up from over the back of her sofa bed. His name is BOBBY.

BOBBY

Hi, I'm a friend of Tim. My name is Bobby.

FRANKIE

Where's Tim?

BOBBY

The bathroom. You like your shelves?

SHOT of the shelves. The workmanship is nothing to write home about.

FRANKIE

Fine, fine.

BOBBY

I know they look crooked. They're not. It's your floors.

FRANKIE

It usually is.

TIM comes out of the bathroom.

TIM

Hi. This is Bobby. We met at a Dr. Pepper audition. I think we're in love.

Tim goes to Frankie, kisses her on cheek.

TIM (cont'd)

We're definitely starving. I hope you told them "no anchovy." I think they do it just to spite me. I know what you're thinking. It's your floors.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Johnny's apartment is even smaller than Frankie's but it's in much better shape. Johnny is sitting in front of the television set eating off a TV table. He has fixed himself chops, vegetables and is drinking a glass of wine. He is eating off a real plate and is using a colorful bandana as a napkin. He has a remote control which he will use frequently. At the moment he is watching WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

JOHNNY

"The quality of mercy," college boy. Ask for a "Y." Not a "P"! You should be ashamed of yourself, letting the whole world see how stupid Americans are becoming. "The quality of mercy," it's right in front of you.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie is eating pizza at a counter in front of her cooking alcove. Tim sits on the sofa eating and a place is set for Bobby, who's in the bathroom. Frankie has put some MUSIC on the PHONOGRAPH. It's Carol King's "Tapestry."

TIM

I know, I know! I said I'd never fall in love again. Where did that get me? Don't get me wrong, Frankie, I love watching television with you, I hope we'll be best friends the rest of our lives, but I mean, there's a whole world out there and there's no use pretending there's not just because our feelings got hurt or there's some goddamn virus.

FRANKIE

I know, I know. But I'm going for a VCR.

TIM

That's a life?

FRANKIE

(nods)

Send out for a pizza, rent a film. That's dinner and a movie and I don't have to deal with some schmuck trying to put his tongue in my ear.

Bobby comes out of the bathroom.

TIM

I am so happy. I am so happy!

Bobby motions with his head towards Frankie, who looks anything but happy at the moment.

SHOT of Frankie eating her pizza, unaware that Tim and Bobby are looking at her.

TIM (cont'd)

Frankie, you are the only person in the world who still listens to Carol King. Come on, let's go home, Bobby, we'll stain the shelves tomorrow.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Johnny is staring at a photograph of himself, his wife and two children. He is dressed in a sports jacket and tie. His wife is in slacks and a shirt. The children are 5 and 7. He puts it back on a shelf, sits and tries to read a paperback edition of "Macbeth." Almost absentmindedly, he uses the remote to turn ON the TV. A night baseball game is in progress. Johnny continues to read with the TV on.

INT. NEDDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nedda, dressed in bedclothes, her hair in curlers, sits on the couch eating a bowl of cereal. On the coffee table in front of her is a caged parakeet. She picks a morsel of cereal out of the bowl and offers it to the bird. The bird rejects it and she shrugs and eats it. The Johnny Carson Show is on the TV.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We hear COUGHING sounds, painful ones. A light is switched on.

CLOSE ON HELEN

Her coughing has awakened her. She looks very old and very frightened outside of the restaurant and her colorful waitress' uniform. The only sound is the loud TICKING of an old-fashioned wind-up alarm CLOCK. Helen stares straight ahead, listening to her own mortality deep within her lungs.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT

Johnny is in the bathroom. He has just come out of the shower. He has dried himself but his hair is still wet. He stands in front of the mirror and examines his body very closely. He turns around and tries to see his backside. He makes a fist and flexes his biceps. He looks down at his genitals.

CLOSE ON JOHNNY IN MIRROR

He seems to be rationally appraising what he sees.

INT. A LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Two people are thrashing about on the sofa in various stages of undress. One is Jorge. One is the WOMAN he was on the phone with. The only light in the room is coming from the television. It's a Spanish variety program. Someone like Iris Chacon is SINGING. The MUSIC is very SALSA.

WOMAN

Jorge! Oh, Jorge!

The struggle continues. Suddenly, overhead lights are switched on as the apartment door is opened.

CLOSE ON JORGE AND THE WOMAN

WOMAN

Papa!

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Helen is still staring straight ahead. She has stopped coughing. She turns off the light.

EXT. STREET - SAME NIGHT (MOS)

It's a rundown street in the West 40's that's frequented by hookers. It's late at night and there are few pedestrians and cars. We see Johnny talking to a hooker named BELLE. Belle is dressed in a cowboy hat, fake-fur jacket over a strapless tank top. She has on a mini-mini skirt. Belle and Johnny come to some sort of agreement and walk down the street arm-in-arm.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Johnny and Belle sit talking.

BELLE

That's all you want?

Johnny nods "yes."

BELLE (cont'd)

Nothing else?

Johnny nods "no."

BELLE (cont'd)

You just want to be held?

Johnny nods "yes."

BELLE (cont'd)

~~Boy, are you some kind of sicko?~~

JOHNNY

(finally)

Naw... it's just... You know when you haven't been touched for a long time, your whole body seems to scream out for the feel of human skin. You don't want sex. You just want huggies. You know what I mean?

BELLE

I'm not sure what to charge for an hour of that.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie is sitting up in her pulled-out sofa bed watching THE HONEYMOONERS. We hear the SOUNDTRACK.

When the movie hits a part of obvious high hilarity, Frankie bursts out laughing.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Johnny, dressed in his boxer shorts, lies on the bed asleep. The hooker lies next to him with her eyes closed, holding him in her arms. She opens her eyes and looks at her watch. The hour isn't up yet. She holds him again and closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Johnny is cooking up a storm. Even Tino stands back, more than a little impressed, then moves away. Johnny's forte is dicing. He takes an onion, a stalk of celery, a green pepper and within seconds reduces them to hundreds of tiny, tiny pieces. He uses his chopping knife with the virtuoso flair of a Japanese chef with his steak knives.

SHOT of Nick looking into the kitchen. He's impressed.

Johnny takes some eggs FRYING in a skillet and flips them over with great elan without breaking the yolk. Luther is not unaware of Johnny's grandstanding as he works with his hot water spray gun. Jorge looks on skeptically.

JORGE

That's a good way to lose a finger, man.

JOHNNY

They grow back.

JORGE

My cousin lost two fingers where he works. He can't tie his own shoes now.

JOHNNY

Don't worry. I wear loafers.

Frankie coming up to the service window.

FRANKIE

I need scrambled with bacon, two easy-overs with sausage and a Belgian waffle.

JOHNNY

I'm Johnny.

FRANKIE
Hi.

JOHNNY
Who are you?

FRANKIE
Frankie. These eggs don't look runny. Mr. De Leon likes 'em runny.

JOHNNY
They're pretty runny.

FRANKIE
He likes 'em real runny.

JOHNNY
That's disgusting.

FRANKIE
He's a regular.

JOHNNY
Okay, okay, raw eggs coming up.

FRANKIE
Not raw, runny.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Frankie is bringing MR. DE LEON his eggs. Mr. De Leon is the sort of retired, elderly gentleman who still dresses in a 3-piece suit everyday. He has a neatly folded newspaper on the table in front of him.

FRANKIE
How do these look?

MR. DE LEON
Perfect. Everything you do is perfect.

FRANKIE
I'll have him broken in by the end of the week.

Cora passes THROUGH the SHOT carrying some dirty dishes. She says something quickly and under her breath to Frankie.

CORA
He's already asked me out.

She is gone.

MR. DE LEON

You girls take such good care of me. I know: I'm supposed to say "ladies."

FRANKIE

You're supposed to say "women."

MR. DE LEON

You're looking at a very old dog, Frankie. In my time I've said tootsies, dolls, gals, chickies, babes and dames.

Johnny is in the kitchen. He has stopped dicing and chopping and sauteing and the million other things he is always doing and looks out into the restaurant.

SHOT of Frankie, Johnny's POV. She looks toward Johnny, suddenly aware that someone is watching her.

CUT BACK TO:

JOHNNY

He resumes working. Tino is preparing salad for the lunch crowd.

TINO

So? So far so good?

JOHNNY

It beats McDonald's. I am congenitally unable to work in a fast-food chain. I lasted two hours at a Jack-in-the-Box once. I felt like I was working in a mailroom, stuffing burgers into little boxes. Cooking should be tactile.

TINO

(uncertainly)

Right.

JOHNNY

(helping him out)

Get your hands on it, touch what you're cooking.

TINO

(home free now)

Right, right: like when you're stuffing a turkey.

JOHNNY

Something like that.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - WAITER'S SERVICE STATION - DAY

Cora is unloading a tray of dirty dishes. Frankie comes up with another load.

FRANKIE

Who asked you out?

CORA

Tom Cruise! "Who asked you out!"
The new guy.

FRANKIE

He just started.

CORA

So? He works fast. I like that
in a guy.

FRANKIE

So you told him yes?

CORA

Of course not. I'm dating Tony.
Besides, there's something about
him I don't like.

FRANKIE

I know what you mean. Something
wise guy.

CORA

Something cute, too.

FRANKIE

You see something cute in every
guy.

CORA

You should try it.

Nedda joins them at the waiter's station.

NEDDA

Helen still out?

FRANKIE

Nick thinks she'll be back tomorrow.

CORA

You're too picky.

She EXITS SHOT. Nedda looks after her and shakes her
head.

NEDDA

Women like that always have
opinions about women like us.

INT. RESTAURANT

Frankie is taking a break at one of the tables in the back. She is looking towards the front of the restaurant.

SHOT of Johnny (Frankie's POV) on a break chatting up Artemis behind the cash register. Even in the rear of the restaurant, we can hear their laughter. Johnny finishes talking to Artemis and starts walking towards the kitchen. He will pass right by Grace and Frankie.

JOHNNY

Hi.

He keeps going.

FRANKIE

Do you know anything about hooking up a VCR?

GRACE

Sorry. Mine usually gets stolen before I can hook them up. What's his story?

FRANKIE

Ask Cora.

GRACE

She do him already. That girl is fast.

(then)

He's got "The Walk."

~~FRANKIE'S VOICE~~ FRANKIE'S VOICE
How do you mean?

GRACE

That uptown walk. Like he's "The Man." Cocky.

FRANKIE

Maybe Jorge knows about VCR's.

GRACE

That boy. All he got on his mind is pussy. If they opened his head, all they'd find is a pile of little hairy triangles. What about your friend? You know, what's-his-name? He can hook it up.

FRANKIE

Tim. He's madly in love.

GRACE

That's why you're mad at him.

FRANKIE

Don't be ridiculous.

GRACE

How did he find someone in this day and age? Isn't he worried about the big A?

FRANKIE

I'm sure he is.

Nick ENTERS the SHOT. He is very agitated.

NICK

Helen's in the hospital. Her sister just called. They think this is it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Helen is in bed with an oxygen mask. She is sleeping. Cora and Frankie sit by her bedside looking at her. They speak in whispers.

CORA

Do you think she knows we're here?

FRANKIE

I don't know.

CORA

Helen. Helen, honey, it's Cora. Can you hear me?

SHOT of NURSE sticking her head into the room.

NURSE

Ladies.

FRANKIE

Okay, we're going.

Nurse goes.

CORA

Jesus, Frankie, it's scary. You think we'll end up like that? Alone.

FRANKIE

She's not alone.

CORA
You know what I mean.

SHOT of Luther opening the door. He has a bouquet of flowers.

LUTHER
Is she awake?

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Cora and Frankie are seen coming back into the restaurant through the front door. They have light coats on over their waitress' uniforms.

SHOT of Nedda. The moment she sees them she starts taking off her apron and going for her coat.

Frankie goes over to Nick.

FRANKIE
(nicely)
Thanks for letting us go.

NICK
How is she?

FRANKIE
Not good.

NICK
Keep an eye on that one, will you?

He nods towards Artemis stationed behind the cash register.

FRANKIE
What do I look like? A chaperone?

NICK
That new guy. You know what he did? He asked her out!

FRANKIE
(jokes)
An inside job!

NICK
I'm gonna tell Artemis that you got your eye on Johnny.

FRANKIE
Get cutta here.
(then)
So what did she say?

NICK

She said what I told her to say:
"No."

FRANKIE

You're going to miss visiting hours.

They have moved to the staff changing area.

NICK

Please!

FRANKIE

I so much as see a guy even
talking to her and I'll kill him.
Okay?

Johnny in the kitchen. He is at the service window.
He has been watching and listening to all this.

SHOT of Frankie (Johnny's POV). She watches Nick walk-
ing through the restaurant, then turns to see Johnny
staring at her.

SHOT of Johnny. He smiles, nods a greeting.

JOHNNY

Kalispera.

FRANKIE

What?

JOHNNY

Kalispera. That's Greek for "good
morning." I'm learning Greek
because the owner is Greek.

FRANKIE

I know what kalispera means.

She moves towards ladies room.

SHOT of Johnny watching her go. Tino joins him at the
service window.

TINO

Ask me what her story is.

Johnny looks at him.

TINO (cont'd)

I don't know what her story is.

INT. LADIES ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Cora is making up in front of the mirror. She will
also apply hair spray. During next speech, Cora exits.

We can only hear Frankie, when she speaks, from behind one of the closed stall doors. CAMERA STAYS on closed stall door as:

FRANKIE'S VOICE

And if I were your age and looked like you and could do it all over again, you know what I'd do? Go to college and get smart. Smart about everything, including men. I think that's the key to everything if you're a woman. Smart.

SOUND of toilet flushing.

FRANKIE'S VOICE (cont'd)

Did you hear he asked Nick's niece out? I'm sure Nedda is next.

Frankie stands up. We see her head over the stall door.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Helen, when she gets out of the hospital.

Frankie realizes she has been talking to herself. She goes to mirror over sink and looks at herself intently. We hear a SCREAM.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

There is a commotion. A customer has overdosed on drugs. He is on the floor. A crowd has gathered around him.

~~SHOT of Frankie coming out of the ladies room, seeing this.~~
SHOT of Frankie coming out of the ladies room, seeing this.

SHOT of crowd around customer, Frankie's POV.

SHOT of Johnny bending over the customer.

JOHNNY

What are you on? Hey! What are you on! I can't help you unless I --
(to others)

Get back! Everybody get back. Somebody call an ambulance.

SHOT of Frankie going for the phone in the kitchen.

SHOT of Johnny bending over the customer.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Can you hear me? Open your eyes!
(to others)
I said get back.

SHOT of Frankie coming into the kitchen. Jorge is on the phone giving his girlfriend a graphic description of the events in the restaurant. Frankie pushes down on phone receiver, disconnecting him. She is already dialing a number as he protests.

Johnny working frantically to revive the customer.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Is there a doctor? Yes? No?
What? Somebody say something? I
said get back! Did somebody call
an ambulance at least?

SHOT of Frankie in the ring of customers surrounding the customer and Johnny.

FRANKIE

They're on the way.

JOHNNY

Thanks.

He bends over the customer.

FRANKIE

He's swallowing his tongue.

JOHNNY

He's -- !

She pushes through customers and joins Johnny over the customer. She takes Johnny's kerchief off from around his temples and uses it to keep customer from swallowing his tongue. Johnny admires this.

FRANKIE

Ow! He bit me.

JOHNNY

Where did you learn to do that?

FRANKIE

I was a Brownie. The Girl Scouts.
I don't remember.

JOHNNY

Did he really bite you?

FRANKIE

He didn't break the skin.

JOHNNY

Let me see.

Frankie pulls her hand away when he tries to take it.

FRANKIE
Epileptic?

JOHNNY
Drugs. O.D.

FRANKIE
You sure?

JOHNNY
One hundred percent.

FRANKIE
Will everyone please go back to
their table? He's fine. The
ambulance is coming. Thank you
for cooperating. You, too, Cora!
Why don't you make that phone call
now, Jorge?

Customers will begin to drift back to their tables,
albeit reluctantly.

JOHNNY
When... what's your name again?

FRANKIE
Frances.

JOHNNY
I'm Johnny.

FRANKIE
I know. Is he breathing?

JOHNNY
Frankie and Johnny. Is that a
coincidence or what?

FRANKIE
I don't think he's breathing.

JOHNNY
He's breathing. Would you like to
go out with me tonight?

FRANKIE
What?

JOHNNY
Would you like to --

FRANKIE
No!

JOHNNY
Tomorrow night?

FRANKIE
I don't believe this.

JOHNNY
Okay, Friday night?

FRANKIE
No. N-O. What's the matter?
Every other woman in this place
busy? Did you try the coffee shop
across the street?

Frankie gets up and goes back to work. Johnny stays
with the customer who is stirring again. He's alive.
Sounds of SIRENS from outside.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - SHOT OF HELEN - NIGHT

laid out in a small room. There are candles, one large
spray of flowers. There are maybe two dozen folding
chairs set up in the room for mourners. Very few of
them are occupied. Present are Frankie, Cora and
Nedda, sitting quietly.

CORA
(sotto)
Oh oh!

They turn at this.

SHOT of Johnny coming into the room. He is neatly
dressed. He stops at the door and signs the visitors
book.

SHOT of Cora, Nedda, and Frankie watching him.

NEDDA
What's he doing here? He didn't
even know her.

CORA
Yes, he did. His first day was
her last. Or was it?

NEDDA
Helen can use all the mourners she
can get.

FRANKIE
Nedda!

NEDDA
I don't mean that unkindly. I'm
just glad we didn't book St.
Patrick's for the funeral.

Johnny comes into the room. He nods to the three women and takes a seat apart from them and in the first row.

SHOT of Nedda, Cora and Frankie watching him. Cora steals a glance at her wristwatch. They whisper.

CORA

I told Burt I'd meet him at seven-thirty.

NEDDA

Who the hell is Burt?

CORA

My other boyfriend.

FRANKIE

So go. Just shut up and go.

NEDDA

I'm coming with you. I hate this neighborhood at night. I hate this neighborhood in day.

CORA

Are you coming?

FRANKIE

We just got here.

NEDDA

It's the thought.

FRANKIE

I don't want to leave her alone.

CORA

(knowingly)

Come on, Nedda. We don't need a brick wall to fall on us.

FRANKIE

Don't be ridiculous.

CORA

Picking up a man in a funeral parlor in front of an actual corpse! Even in my wildest dreams I wouldn't do that.

FRANKIE

(loud)

Oh blow it out your ass.

(then to coffin)

Excuse me, Helen.

Cora and Nedda get up and leave. Johnny turns. He smiles and waves at them. He turns back to looking straight ahead without turning to look at Frankie.

SHOT of Frankie watching Johnny.

SHOT of Johnny. He gets up from the chair he is sitting in and goes and kneels in front of the open casket. His eyes begin to tear.

SHOT of Frankie watching this.

Johnny gets up and hurries out of the room.

SHOT of Frankie watching him go.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Frankie is walking home. She carries a paper bag with food she has bought at a take-out place.

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT HOUSE - REAR COURTYARD - NIGHT

CAMERA PANS across the lighted apartment windows. Frankie's POV.

SHOT of Frankie, looking from her window across to the apartments behind her. She has turned all the lights off in her apartment except for the television set which has a movie playing. Frankie cannot be seen in this light by anyone looking out of their apartment towards hers. In one apartment we see an elderly couple having dinner. They sit opposite each other. They are not speaking. In another, we see a young man trying to give himself a haircut. In another, a young woman, dressing to go out for the evening. Frankie's eyes keep going back to one apartment. A man sits watching television and drinking beer. He gets up, opens closet door and angrily starts throwing white nurses' uniforms to the floor. A woman enters SHOT, her coat over her nurse's uniform. Man starts yelling at her.

SHOT of Frankie watching them. The man strikes the woman. Frankie winces but keeps watching.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SHOT of Johnny working out with small barbells. He stops and goes to phone. He dials a number.

INT. SUBURBAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

A MAN, his WIFE, and two children are having dinner. They seem happy. The children are boisterous but not impossible. The phone RINGS. The man answers it. Wife tries to quiet children while he speaks.

MAN

Hello?

WIFE

Sshh! Stop it, children! Who is it?

MAN

Hello? Hello?

SHOT of Johnny on the other end, unable to speak. He listens to the Man's "hello's" a little longer, then quietly puts the receiver down. Man hangs up and exchanges look with Wife. Their glance would seem to indicate that they know who it was.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie steps up to the window with a peanut butter jar and spoon. It's a new jar and she'll eat the top first. As she does this, she looks out. The window where the man was hitting the woman is dark now.

She looks at another window. A black postman, dressed in an undershirt and his uniform pants, with big regulation keychain hanging from his belt, is trying to teach his puppy to be paper trained. Newspapers are spread out on the floor. He's down on one knee urging the puppy onto the floor. The puppy thinks he's playing and licks his face.

Frankie smiles and scoops out a large glob of peanut butter and swallows it and the trouble begins. The peanut butter almost completely blocks her air passage. Choking, she drinks water. It doesn't work. She tries ~~pounding herself on her back.~~ It doesn't work. ~~She tries to give herself the Heimlich.~~ No good. Finally she swallows it. Puts down jar and goes to bed.

INT. THE RESTAURANT - NEXT DAY

Frankie's face FILLS the SCREEN.

She is at a table, talking to Mr. De Leon.

MR. DE LEON

Do you blame me, Frankie?

FRANKIE

No, I don't blame you. We're just all gonna miss you.

MR. DE LEON

All my life I swore I'd never move to Florida and live with them. And now I'm doing it.

(MORE)

MR. DE LEON (CONT'D)
 I hate her, Frankie. That's not a
 daughter-in-law. That's a
 concentration camp commandant!
 Maybe you'll come down and visit
 me some time?

SHOT of Johnny watching Frankie through the service
 window.

SHOT of Frankie and Mr. De Leon (JOHNNY'S POV). They
 are laughing now.

SHOT of Johnny, smiling at this.

Frankie comes up to the service window.

JOHNNY
 Scramble two, very runny, dry the
 bacon and side of margarine for
 the rye toast.

At a glance from Frankie.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
 I read your mind, right? He's one
 of your regulars. He has the same
 thing every day and after all this
 time he still says, "No butter,
 side of margarine."

Johnny will begin to cook up the order. He will
 continue speaking to Frankie through the service window
 as he works.

~~FRANKIE~~
 Can I ask you something?

JOHNNY
 Shoot.

Johnny is aware that Tino has stopped work to listen to
 him and Frankie.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
 Do you mind?

He shakes his head and looks back at Frankie.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
 I'm all yours.

FRANKIE
 You hardly knew Helen.

JOHNNY
 Who's Helen?

FRANKIE
The old waitress who --

JOHNNY
Oh, that Helen!

FRANKIE
You had tears in your eyes.

JOHNNY
I think death is very sad.

FRANKIE
You didn't even know her.

JOHNNY
I don't have to know someone to
feel sad for them. It's called
empathy.

FRANKIE
Empathy?

JOHNNY
The sympathetic vibrations between
you and another human being.

FRANKIE
I know what empathy means.

JOHNNY
No, you don't. But that's okay.
I didn't either until today. I'm
learning a new word a day while
I'm shaving.

FRANKIE
Why?

JOHNNY
You don't want to be going out
with a protomoronnic, sub-cretinous,
semi-literate dork, do you?

Frankie stares at him. Grace ENTERS SHOT. Frankie is
blocking the service window. She will have to step a
little to one side to let Grace get her order in.

GRACE
I need a burger deluxe, medium
rare, extra-crisp fries and a
swiss omelette.

FRANKIE
Who said I was going out with you?

GRACE

Am I interrupting anything?

FRANKIE

Don't hold your breath.

JOHNNY

She's going out with me.

Frankie EXITS SHOT.

INT. CORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Naked legs and arms and sheets FILL the SCREEN. There is a lot of movement going on. Very few sounds though. There is enough light to see that the couple making love is Cora and Johnny.

SHOT of Cora's cat watching them.

The TELEVISION is on. Cora has left it on the "Letterman Show." We can see a reflection of what's going on on the bed in the glass of the television screen. On the screen, Stupid Pet Tricks are in progress. The cat turns and watches them. CLOSE on Johnny's face. His eyes are squeezed closed hard. He doesn't look like he's having much fun.

CLOSE ON Cora's face. Ditto.

CLOSE ON cat. We hear a sound from Johnny, halfway between a cry of ecstasy and a yelp.

Sounds of people THRASHING on the bed stop. The room will grow very still. The cat will yawn and begin to lick herself.

SHOT of Johnny and Cora. He's still on top of her.

CORA

Did you come?

JOHNNY

I couldn't help it. I'm sorry.

CORA

Are you sure?

JOHNNY

Of course, I'm sure. Didn't you hear me?

CORA

It didn't feel like you came.

JOHNNY

Well I did. A lot. It was terrific.

Johnny rolls off Cora. There is a silence. They both look up at the ceiling. Even though they're very close together, they seem very far apart.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

I decided I wasn't going to respect you on the first date, if we ever had one! That I was going to treat you like an animal and make love to you the first chance I got.

CORA

Is that supposed to be funny?

JOHNNY

Unh-hunh.

CORA

So why aren't I laughing?

JOHNNY

Same reason I'm not. I didn't mean that. I mean, I meant it, but I shouldn't have said it.

CORA

It was honest.

JOHNNY

I wanted it to be funny.

CORA

Listen, it takes two to tango. My mind was on my Mastercard payments.

JOHNNY

You know what we are? Supine.

CORA

Say what?

JOHNNY

Lying down. Supine.

Johnny rolls over, so that he is facing Cora who is lying flat on her back.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

It's a beautiful word. Supine. Another one I like is euphony, a pleasing or sweet sound. Can I sleep over?

CORA

No.

JOHNNY

Please.

CORA

It's not a good idea.

JOHNNY

I'm scared to take the subway this time of night.

CORA

So take a cab.

JOHNNY

I don't have the money.

CORA

Johnny, if you stay over, we'll both be awake all night, pretending to be asleep, wondering why we didn't hit it off.

JOHNNY

We hit it off. Well at least I did. I hit it off. What do you mean, we didn't hit it off?

CORA

You're just lonely. I'm just lonely. Two lonely people do not Romeo and Juliet make.

JOHNNY

I thought you had a boyfriend anyway.

CORA

I have two boyfriends. I'm looking for one Mr. Right.

JOHNNY

And you thought maybe I was it? And that's the reason you won't let me spend the night?

CORA

Johnny, you don't really want to.

There is another pause. Johnny reaches down for his clothes on the floor beside the bed and begins to dress. Cora watches him a while.

CORA (cont'd)

You've got a great ass.

JOHNNY

Thank you.

CORA

It's the kind of ass you just sort of want to bite like a big marshmallow.

JOHNNY

Thank you. Where's the nearest subway?

CORA

Broadway and 86th. Are you blushing?

JOHNNY

No.

CORA

Yes, you are.

JOHNNY

I'm not used to women telling me I have a great ass. I'm used to telling them they have a great ass.

Johnny is a fast dresser. He's got most of his clothes back on already. In fact, he can't wait to get out of there.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

We'll do this again sometime.

He leans down and gives her a friendly kiss on the cheek.

CORA

No, we won't. You're a nice guy. Make some nice gal happy, why don't you?

JOHNNY

That is my fondest wish, Cora.

CORA

I believe you.

JOHNNY

86th and Broadway, you said?

CORA

Change at 72nd for the express.

JOHNNY

I'll see you tomorrow.

CORA

That you will.

JOHNNY

Good night.

CORA

It's not the end of the world.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie is sleeping. The TELEVISION is on but there is no picture. The station she was watching has gone off for the evening. The telephone begins to RING. Frankie struggles awake and answers it.

FRANKIE

Hello?... Cora?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Johnny comes up the subway exit stairs. He is walking at a steady, deliberate pace. He turns at the SOUND of someone approaching.

JOHNNY

Shit.

Johnny is knocked off his feet by a flying figure. They roll on the sidewalk in combat until the figure suddenly stops, on top of Johnny, and begins to laugh.

SHOT of the man. It's Les.

LES

I don't believe it! Penny, look who it is!

~~SHOT of Penny inching out of the shadows.~~

LES (cont'd)

This is too much! This is something else.

His laughter is out of control. He is clearly on something.

PENNY

Hi, Johnny.

JOHNNY

What are you doing this side of the river?

PENNY

Things are kinda desperate.

JOHNNY

I can see that. Jesus Christ, it's less than a week.

Johnny looks at Penny.

PENNY

I tried.

Les still has Johnny pinned to the sidewalk and is laughing wildly.

LES

Almost cold-cocked my old pal!

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NEXT DAY

The men's changing area. There are several metal lockers. Tino, Jorge and Luther are changing from their street clothes. Johnny, still in his street clothes, sits on a bench with an open book in his lap. He is still in his street clothes.

JOHNNY

(reading)

"But look, the morn in russet mantle
clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward
hill." Isn't that great?

TINO

What the hell does it mean?

JORGE

It means the son-of-a-bitchin' sun
is up but why the hell doesn't the
dick-head just say so, instead of
that russet mantle shit.

JOHNNY

That's why he's William
Shakespeare and I'm reading his
book which cost \$11.95 and you're
Jorge and you're washing dishes
for \$5.25 an hour and I'm Johnny
and I'm slinging hash for \$8.75.

JORGE

Screw Shakespeare.

JOHNNY

I love your vocabulary, Jorge.
It's positively Elizabethan.

JORGE

It's good enough. You need two
words to make it in this town.
"Fuck" and "you."

TINO
Somebody didn't get laid last night.

JORGE
Baby, I get laid every night.

LUTHER
Yakity-yakity-yak.

The men laugh at Luther's way of quietly and effectively undercutting Jorge. On their laughter, we go to...

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME DAY

This is women's dressing area. Other side of the partition that divides the dressing areas. Frankie, Cora and Nedda changing out of their street clothes and into their uniforms. The women have clearly been listening to every word coming over the partition from the men's side. They will speak low, so that the men can't hear them, during the following.

CORA
Do you think less of me?

FRANKIE
I could care less.

NEDDA
I think less of you.

CORA
I didn't ask you.

NEDDA
I think you're both a couple of tramps.

CORA
I thought I'd try him out first for you two. I was doing you a favor.

FRANKIE
He really...?

CORA
Two minutes, tops.

FRANKIE
I hate that.

NEDDA
I know what you two are talking about.

Cora and Frankie burst out laughing.

INT. RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - DAY

Johnny is cooking away. The restaurant is crowded and the orders are pouring in. Frankie comes to the service window.

FRANKIE

I need a meatloaf platter and two chef's salads.

JOHNNY

So why won't you go to Peter's party with me?

FRANKIE

I don't want to.

JOHNNY

Life is full of things we don't want to do. I'll pick you up at seven.

FRANKIE

Sometimes you're really obnoxious.

JOHNNY

No, I'm really eager to go out with you. There's a big difference. 546 West 55th Street, right?

FRANKIE

Who told you?

JOHNNY

It's right on your punch card.

FRANKIE

What are you doing looking at my punch card? You leave my punch card alone or I'll tell Nick.

JOHNNY

So what's your apartment number? You might as well tell me. I already know your social security number.

FRANKIE

Look, I'm not Cora.

JOHNNY

I certainly hope not. So what's your apartment number?

FRANKIE

6A.

JOHNNY

I don't believe you.

FRANKIE

Where's my meatloaf?

JOHNNY

Here's my heart.

Nedda joins Frankie at the service window.

NEDDA

I gotta tuna melt, a tongue down
with slaw and a split pea.

JOHNNY

7A? 5F? 4G? Am I close?

NEDDA

Did you hear me?

FRANKIE

We heard you.

JOHNNY

Bug off, Nedda!

NEDDA

Does Nick know what's going on?
I'm gonna speak to Nick.Nedda EXITS SHOT. Tino joins Johnny at their side of
the service window, then disappears in the back again.

TINO

Burger deluxe. Pick up!

FRANKIE

Why do you want to go out with me?

JOHNNY

Why not?

FRANKIE

That's romantic!

JOHNNY

(nice)

Give me a chance. 3F?

FRANKIE

(stares; then finally)

6A.

JOHNNY
You're really 6A?

FRANKIE
Really.

JOHNNY
Seven o'clock.

FRANKIE
And would you mind not telling anyone?

Johnny crosses his heart.

JOHNNY
Thank you. You have made me the happiest of men.

FRANKIE
I don't even remember what my order was.

JOHNNY
A meatloaf platter and two chef's salads.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie is in the bathroom getting ready. She is fixing her hair in the vanity mirror. She has left the door open so that she can talk to Tim and Bobby who are in the main room. Tim and Bobby have finally gotten around to hooking up her VCR.

~~FRANKIE: I'm not on the market.~~ TIM: I'm not on the market.
What time is he picking you up? I want to get a look at him.

FRANKIE
He's not your type.

TIM
I'm not on the market.

FRANKIE
Neither am I.

TIM
Hah! Where does that wire go?

BOBBY
Not there.

Tim and Bobby continue hooking up the VCR. Frankie comes out of the bathroom.

FRANKIE
Does this look all right?

TIM
I'm sure it's more than he
deserves. Is he cute?

FRANKIE
Not especially.

TIM
We'll be the judge of that.

BOBBY
Leave me out of it.

TIM
So what do you know about this
guy?

FRANKIE
Not much. How do these shoes go?

TIM
Try the pumps again. He could be
a mass murderer, a psycho. You
never know these days.

FRANKIE
Thanks for the pep talk.

TIM
The pumps. Definitely the pumps.
What do you think?

BOBBY ~~What do you think?~~
I said leave me out of it.

TIM
I'm giving us six weeks.

BUZZER rings. Frankie panics.

TIM (cont'd)
I wish I had an Instamatic.

BOBBY
For Frankie's date?

TIM
No, to take shots of the VCR box.
Of course for Frankie's date.
It's novelty night.

FRANKIE
I dated plenty. How about that
Welshman last year? I went out
with him for six months.

TIM
I don't count him. I didn't like him.

FRANKIE
I nearly married him.

TIM
That's probably why I didn't like him. I knew he wasn't going to leave his wife. They never do.

FRANKIE
What do you know about things like that?

TIM
More than you do obviously.
There is a KNOCK on the door.

TIM (cont'd)
What did he do? Run up? Well, let him in.

Frankie fusses over her hair and dress one more time.

FRANKIE
Who am I going to tell him you two are?

TIM
Ryan O'Neal and Farrah? John McEnroe and Tatum? I don't care. You want us to hide in the closet?
She opens the door.

SHOT of Johnny, breathing hard.

JOHNNY
I ran up. Six flights. That's a lot.

FRANKIE
You didn't have to do that.

JOHNNY
You got a chair or something?

FRANKIE
I'm sorry.

Johnny staggers into apartment and sits.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
This is Tim and...

TIM

Bobby.

FRANKIE

They're hooking up my VCR.

TIM

I'm Tim. He's Bobby.

JOHNNY

I'm Johnny.

There is an awkward pause. Tim and Bobby continue to fiddle with the VCR. From the way they're studying the manual, it's clear they're not very skilled at it.

JOHNNY

I thought we'd be alone.

Tim motions to Bobby and they both walk into the closet and shut the door.

FRANKIE

Stop that. We're leaving.

(to Johnny)

Come on, we'll be late.

Tim and Bobby come out of the closet, grinning.

TIM

We were comparing our glow-in-the-dark watchbands.

Johnny stares at them as she pulls him out the door.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A farewell party is in progress with appropriate banners, etc. The mood is festive. People are dancing. A hot girl DJ plays RECORDS. Everyone from the restaurant is there; however, they look a little out of place with all of Peter's young friends. CAMERA PANS to Peter's bedroom. The bed is heaped with coats. Frankie and Johnny are sitting on the window ledge finishing off a piece of cake. A young couple is making out near them. Frankie and Johnny see that the girl is Artemis but don't let on.

JOHNNY

I used to be a second sentence talker. Now I'm a first. At parties I could never go up to somebody and say the first sentence. You know, "Where you from, come here often?" I could only say the second sentence.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 "I'm from Brooklyn" or "My second
 time here, etc." Now I mastered
 the first sentence. I can go up
 to anybody, look 'em in the eye
 and say a sentence.

FRANKIE
 I'm a third sentence person.

JOHNNY
 You can't be a third.

FRANKIE
 Yeah. A person asks a question.
 The person I'm with answers and
 then I comment on the answer.

Nick comes in.

NICK
 You see Artemis?

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY
 No.

Nick leaves. Frankie and Johnny look at each other
 surprised they said the same answer.

JOHNNY
 How old are you?

FRANKIE
 None of your business. How old
 are you?

JOHNNY
 What do you think?

FRANKIE
 40's?

JOHNNY
 Ouch!

FRANKIE
 Then don't ask!

Johnny takes her hand in his.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
 So how old are you?

JOHNNY
 I don't know.

FRANKIE
Everybody knows how old they are.

JOHNNY
I used to know, but I forgot.

FRANKIE
That's a great answer. Can I borrow it?

JOHNNY
Go ahead, I did.

FRANKIE
Who from?

Johnny traces her hand with his finger during this.

JOHNNY
I don't remember. Half the things I got up here, I don't remember where they came from. It doesn't seem fair. People ought to get credit for all the things they give and teach us. God, you're fabulous!

FRANKIE
I feel like I'm supposed to say "thank you."

JOHNNY
It's not necessary.

FRANKIE
~~FRANKIE: I want to know if you can have my hand back?~~ Can I have my hand back?

JOHNNY
I want you to notice how we're connecting. I wanted to date a lot of people until I found someone to connect with. It's you. My hand is flowing into yours. My eyes are trying to see inside yours.

FRANKIE
That's not connecting. That's holding and staring. Connecting is when the other person isn't even around and you could die from just thinking of them.

JOHNNY
That's missing. This is connecting.

FRANKIE
Yeah, well my nose itches.

She takes her hand from his and scratches her nose.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
You're not the easiest person to
talk to anybody ever met.

JOHNNY
(smiles)
I certainly hope not.

INT. PARTY - LIVING ROOM

Peter's making a toast. The dancing has stopped.

PETER
... And finally to all of you who
helped me when I was a nobody I
honestly believe I will forget you
when I'm big in Hollywood, so
that's why I'm thanking you now.
Everybody dance.

All laugh. Dancing starts. Johnny asks Frankie.

FRANKIE
No, try Nedda. That's her thing.

JOHNNY
(goes to Nedda)
Come on, Nedda, let's show these
kids a little.

~~FRANKIE (cont'd) I can't stay long, I gotta feed my bird.~~
NEDDA
I can't stay long, I gotta feed my
bird.

Peter comes over to Frankie.

PETER
You're having fun.

FRANKIE
Yeah. Great party.

PETER
Confession. The first day I stole
one of your tips.

FRANKIE
I know. But you put it back the
next week.

PETER
I was broke.

FRANKIE

I'm glad you're getting out,
Peter. I wish you the best.

Peter and Frankie hug. Johnny watches from dance floor
seeing a moment of tenderness in Frankie.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND NEDDA

They dance improv style but the younger kids love it.
Frankie can't help but smile at Johnny.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Johnny and Frankie are walking along. He has her by
the arm. You can tell from Frankie's expression that
he hasn't stopped talking since they left the party.

JOHNNY

Love can be fireworks, like in
that movie, what's-its-name with
you know, what's-his-name and
what's-her-face? Never mind. Or
it can be nice, quiet music or it
can be having a Western omelette
together at 3 a.m. It can even be
something dumb, like waiting for
the bus to come. It don't make
the bus come any sooner but it
makes the wait a heck of a lot
more interesting. Do you think I
talk too much?

FRANKIE

I don't think you always give the
other person a chance to --

JOHNNY

Talking to you comes real easy. I
appreciate that.

FRANKIE

Well, it's been very nice.

JOHNNY

What do you mean "been?" It still
is. And what do you mean "nice?"
It's terrific. Come on, I want to
buy you a flower.

FRANKIE

Flowers at this hour? You know,
it's against the law to break into
the Botanical Gardens.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's a side street on the Westside. Probably in the 20's. Frankie and Johnny are walking along. They round the corner and are confronted with the flower mart. It's about two city blocks that house the wholesale flower market. It's bustling and has a palette of a million colors. Frankie is spellbound by the sight before her...

JOHNNY

It's the Flower Mart. It's a secret place of mine where I take special girls. Just me and a couple of thousand florists know about it.

FRANKIE

And a couple of thousand girls
too.

JOHNNY

No, you're the first.

Frankie becomes uncomfortable.

FRANKIE

FRANKIE
Come on, let's look at the
flowers.

Frankie and Johnny start to walk among the vendors.
Johnny stops by a stall that's manned by a middle-aged
VENDOR.

JOENNY

JOHNNY
One rose.

VENDOR

One. Mister, I'm a wholesaler. I sell flowers by the gross. Not in lots of "one."

JOHNNY

JOHNNY
You got a million roses. You
can't sell me one?

VENDOR

Here's my answer. See if you can get it: "Mister, I don't want to talk to you. Get lost."

Vendor gives him the finger.

FRANKIE

Man selling roses with one hand
and give us the finger with the
other. Love New York City.

OLD LADY vendor working the next booth calls to him.

OLD LADY
I'll sell you a flower.

Frankie and Johnny walk over to her. She has boxes and crates of lovely corsages.

OLD LADY (cont'd)
Pay him no mind. He forgot what it's like to be in love. The fire went out in his loins. He's an old fart.

The man Vendor overheard.

VENDOR
Hey, what'd ya call me?

OLD LADY
An old fart! Now shut up! Here's a corsage for the lady.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Frankie and Johnny in another flower area walking. Johnny is taking corsage out of box and then pins the corsage on her jacket. He stares at her intently. She holds her rose. A guy is playing a boom box with PRETTY MUSIC nearby.

FRANKIE
Thank you. It's beautiful.
(then)
I wish you'd quit looking at me like that.

JOHNNY
Like what?

FRANKIE
Like that. It's too intense. You don't look. You stare. It gives me the creeps.

Johnny kisses her. After a few moments Frankie pulls away.

JOHNNY
Let's go back to your place.

FRANKIE
Look, I like you but... Does it have to be tonight?

JOHNNY
Yes.

FRANKIE

Who says.

JOHNNY

We may not make it to tomorrow. I might get knifed if you make me go home. You might choke on a chicken bone. Unknown poison gasses could kill us both in our sleep. When it comes to love, life's cheap and it's short. So don't screw with it and you'll pardon my French.

FRANKIE

This isn't love.

JOHNNY

(pause, then)

Okay, it's not love but it's a step in the right direction.

He kisses her again. This time, Frankie responds fully. PULL BACK and see them kissing amongst all the flowers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie and Johnny are kissing passionately. Still kissing, Johnny begins to unbutton his shirt. Frankie pulls apart.

FRANKIE

~~Let me see your chest.~~

She unbuttons his shirt.

JOHNNY

What are you looking at?

FRANKIE

You have a nice chest.

JOHNNY

Thank you. So do you.

FRANKIE

Thank you. Help me get the bed down.

They begin to open up the sofa bed. Frankie suddenly seems at ease.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
I can just hear you now at work:
"Hey, guys, that Frankie's a real
nympho."

JOHNNY
That is probably just about the
last thing in the entire world I
would do about tonight. You
really don't know me. I hate
yakking. All yakking is dumb.

During the following, they will make up the sofa-bed.

JOHNNY
"I slept with Frankie." "Oh yeah,
well I slept with Nancy Reagan."
"Big effing pardon-my-French deal,
the two of yous. I slept with
Mother Teresa." So it goes.

Frankie starts for the bathroom.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
Where are you going?

FRANKIE
I'll be right back. Don't panic.
Keep talking. I can hear you.

Johnny watches as Frankie goes into bathroom. He calls
after her.

JOHNNY
Do you mind if I turn some lights
off?

He begins to move about the room turning off lamps. As
he speaks, he looks out window.

SHOT of Johnny at the apartment window in the darkened
room.

SHOT of man striking woman in the apartment across the
way.

SHOT of Johnny reacting.

JOHNNY
Hey! Hey!

He tries to open window. It is locked with a padlock.

SHOT of Frankie joining him at the window. She has
changed into a bathrobe.

FRANKIE
It's their thing. She likes it.

JOHNNY

Nobody could like getting hit like that.

FRANKIE

I saw her in the A&P. She was wearing a nurse's uniform. Living with him, that was a smart career choice.

JOHNNY

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

FRANKIE

I hate being used to them.

Johnny turns away from the window and faces her.

JOHNNY

I would never hit you. I would never hit a woman.

He brings her to him and kisses her. After a bit, Frankie reaches for his belt, undoes it, opens his pants and lets them drop to the floor. Johnny wears fairly baggy boxer shorts with a fairly corny design or slogan on them.

FRANKIE

You got something?

JOHNNY

Talk about a mood-changer!

FRANKIE

Well do you? ~~IN THE NEXT SCENE~~ ~~THEY ARE~~ ~~IN THE NEXT SCENE~~ ~~THEY ARE~~ ~~IN THE NEXT SCENE~~ ~~THEY ARE~~

JOHNNY

I've been tested.

FRANKIE

I don't know that.

JOHNNY

You could take my word for it.

FRANKIE

(firm)

No rubber, forget it.

EXT. THE ROOF OF FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frankie and Johnny are sitting on the edge of the roof looking at the skyline. Johnny has his pants and shirt back on.

His shirt is out of his pants. Frankie's dressed in her bathrobe. She's a little chilly and hugs herself for warmth.

FRANKIE

You mad at me?

JOHNNY

Naw, I ain't mad at you. It's just that I hate rubbers. It's like having sex with your clothes on. Naw, it's like shampooing your hair with a shower cap on.

FRANKIE

You think it feels so great for us? With lubricants and reservoir tips and all that. It just doesn't feel right. It feels fake. And just when I get used to white, they come out with all those different colors. It's like getting screwed in technicolor.

JOHNNY

(surprised)

I never thought women didn't like --

FRANKIE

Why would you. You're busy shampooing your hair with a showercap. God, I'm so sick and tired of living this way, that we're all going to die from one another...

JOHNNY

It's not just a goddamn virus that's doing it. It's all this mistrust, distrust, whatever the hell you want to call it. I fucking hate rubbers! Pardon my French. But you're right. I'll use one.

FRANKIE

I never thought I would even contemplate sleeping with a man who said "Pardon my French" all the time.

JOHNNY

Done. Finished. You got it.

FRANKIE

I mean, here do you pick up an expression like that?

JOHNNY

Out of respect for a person. A
woman in this case.

FRANKIE

Assholes say "Pardon my French."

JOHNNY

I'm not an asshole.

FRANKIE

I didn't say you were.

Frankie shivers, hugs herself and rubs her arms.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

I'm cold. Let's go back
downstairs.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Johnny sits on the bed. Frankie is sitting at the
nighttable. She picks up a brush and begins to brush
her hair.

JOHNNY

I could watch you do that for the
rest of my life.

FRANKIE

Get real.

JOHNNY

I think a woman brushing and
fixing her hair is one of the
supremely great sights of life.
I'd put it up there with the Grand
Canyon and a mother nursing her
child. Triumphant facts of
nature.

FRANKIE

You've been to the Grand Canyon?

JOHNNY

No.

FRANKIE

Me either. I want to go there
someday. Hawaii, too. Hey,
c'mon, you're staring again!

JOHNNY

Open your robe.

FRANKIE

No!

She brushes her hair a beat. Johnny just looks at her.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
Why?

JOHNNY
I want to look at it.

FRANKIE
No!

She brushes her hair another beat.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
Why?

JOHNNY
I bet you have a beautiful...

FRANKIE
(interrupts)
I hate that word, Johnny.

JOHNNY
I wasn't going to say that one.

FRANKIE
I hate both of them.

JOHNNY
All right, thing! and I'm asking
you to open your robe so I can
look at it. Just look. Fifteen
seconds.

FRANKIE
I don't know if you're playing
games or being serious.

JOHNNY
Both. Serious games. Do you have
to name everything? If I had said
"You have a beautiful parakeet,"
you'd have let me see it and we'd
be on to something else.

FRANKIE
I had a parakeet. I hated it. I
was glad when it died.

She stands up.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
Okay, but then you're going!

She opens her robe.

JOHNNY

Oh! Yes!

FRANKIE

I'm timing this. One thousand one, one thousand -- I told my cousin I didn't want a bird. I hate birds. She swore I'd love a parakeet. What's to love?

CLOSE on Frankie as she holds her robe open for Johnny but looks away from him.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

They don't do anything except not sing when you want them to, sing when you don't and make that awful scratching noise on the floor of their cage. If I ever have another pet, it'll be a dog. A Golden Lab. Something that shows a little enthusiasm when you walk through the door. Something you can hold. The only time I got my hands on that goddamn parakeet was the day it dropped dead and I had to pick it up to throw in the garbage can.

She suddenly closes her robe and turns away from Johnny.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Hey, come on! That has gotta be fifteen seconds! You want a sandwich?

Frankie goes to the refrigerator. She starts taking out the makings of a sandwich.

JOHNNY

God, you're beautiful!

FRANKIE

I got meatloaf.

Johnny comes over to where Frankie is working at a counter area and sits on a stool on the other side.

JOHNNY

You are so, so beautiful!

Frankie works on the sandwich. Johnny stares at her intently. Frankie nervously turns on a small portable RADIO she keeps on one of the kitchen shelves. SOFT ROCK is heard.

FRANKIE

After this, you're going.

JOHNNY

We'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

FRANKIE

There's no bridge to cross except the Brooklyn one.

JOHNNY

You know what I was thinking while I was looking at you over there!

FRANKIE

I should have guessed this was coming! Do you want toast?

JOHNNY

I was thinking "There's got to be more to life than this but I'll be goddamned if I know what it is!"

FRANKIE

I'm giving you toast.

She puts two slices of bread into the toaster.

JOHNNY

I want to drown in this woman. I want to die here. So why is she talking about parakeets? The inequity of human relationships! I actually thought that word: "inequity." I didn't even know it was in my vocabulary.

FRANKIE

Maybe it's because I was ill at ease.

JOHNNY

Because of me?

FRANKIE

Maybe I don't like being looked at there that way.

JOHNNY

Bullshit! You don't like being looked at, period.

FRANKIE

Ow!

JOHNNY
What happened?

FRANKIE
I cut myself.

JOHNNY
Let me see.

FRANKIE
It's all right.

JOHNNY
Let me see!

FRANKIE
Look, I don't think this is going
to work out.

Johnny heads for the bathroom.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
I'm a BLT down sort of person and
I think you're looking for someone
a little more pheasant under
glass.

SOUNDS of Johnny opening the medicine cabinet and
noisily rummaging through it.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
What are you doing?

Frankie crosses room and goes into bathroom.

Johnny turns from the medicine chest just as Frankie
enters. He has a Band-Aid and a bottle of iodine.

JOHNNY
Sit.

Frankie sits on the closed toilet seat.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
Give me your finger.

Frankie puts her finger out, as Johnny treats it.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
It's because I asked to look at
you, isn't it?

FRANKIE
It's because of a lot of things.
Ow!

JOHNNY

A man likes a woman. All right, maybe he uses street talk but it's nice street talk, affectionate. I was doing something affectionate and you took offense.

FRANKIE

I'm not very spontaneous that way.

JOHNNY

Boy, if you had said to me, "Johnny, you have the most terrific dick on you," I would be so happy.

He finishes with the Band-Aid.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

There you go.

FRANKIE

Thank you.

They look at each other. He pulls her up and towards him and kisses her. It is a long and mutually satisfying one.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Okay, but you gotta...

JOHNNY

I promise I will.

FRANKIE

Where is it? I want to see it.

Johnny is still nuzzling her.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Now!

JOHNNY

All right, I didn't bring one.

She turns on the overhead bathroom light.

FRANKIE

All right, let's go. Move it!

Johnny doesn't move.

JOHNNY

The truth is I didn't think this would happen the first time.

FRANKIE

The truth is it's not going to!
Out!

JOENNY

I mean it. If I'd brought
something you would have thought I
was counting on it.

FRANKIE

Why won't you just go?

JOENNY

This has gotta be a first: a man
is penalized for respecting a
woman!

FRANKIE

You're not being penalized.
You're just not getting laid.

JOENNY

What about my sandwich?

FRANKIE

Then will you go?

JOENNY

"But not gently."

FRANKIE

Yes or no?

JOENNY

Yes.

She goes to kitchen work area and resumes making the
meatloaf sandwiches. Johnny will sit on the stool at
the counter opposite her.

JOENNY (cont'd)

Do you have a best friend?

FRANKIE

Not really.

JOENNY

That's okay. I'll be your best
friend.

FRANKIE

You think a lot of yourself, don't
you?

JOENNY

Not really. I need a best friend,
too.

Johnny takes her hand off the counter and kisses it.

FRANKIE

You know what I was staring at in
the restaurant?

Johnny shakes his head and keeps kissing her hand and
fingers.

JOHNNY

I knew it, I knew it!

FRANKIE

Your wrists. You have sexy
wrists.

JOHNNY

What do you think is sexy about
them?

FRANKIE

I don't know. The shape. The
hairs. That vein there. What's
that?

JOHNNY

A mole.

FRANKIE

I could live without that.

Johnny pulls her towards him and kisses her across the
counter. After a while, Frankie breaks apart.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Look in the medicine chest. I've
got some. I didn't want you to
get the wrong impression.

Johnny goes to the bathroom. Frankie goes to the
window and looks out across the backyards. The lights
are out in most of the apartments.

In one apartment we see the couple with the dog dancing
together. Frankie reacts to sounds of Johnny CRASHING
around in her medicine chest again.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

They're behind -- !

JOHNNY (O.S.)

I found them.

Frankie goes to bed/sofa and sits.

SHOT of Johnny coming out of the bathroom.

JOHNNY
Hello again.

FRANKIE
Hi. Is it on?

JOHNNY
Well not yet! You can't put it on
when it's -- !

FRANKIE
I know!

Frankie turns on the clock radio by one side of the bed/sofa. ROCK AND ROLL is playing. She quickly changes stations and stops at some quiet CLASSICAL MUSIC being played.

Johnny is moving around the room turning off the lights. While his back is to her, Frankie quickly takes off her robe and gets under the covers. Johnny turns and sees her in bed. He gets in bed and pulls the covers up. A moment later and his undershorts are off. He tosses them on the floor. He turns toward her and kisses her.

JOHNNY
I wouldn't have gotten the wrong impression.

SHOT of radio. "THE DANCE OF THE HAPPY SHADES" from Gluck's ORFEO ET EURIDICE is being played.

FRANKIE (O.S.)
Oh!

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The kitchen is humming. Luther is spraying dishes. Tino is working the grill. Jorge is talking on the phone. Johnny is cooking but his attention is on Frankie, who he can see through the service window as she waits tables in the restaurant proper.

Cora appears at the service window with an order. She fills a bowl with vegetable soup as she speaks.

CORA
I need a eggs over easy and one
roast chicken. So what happened?
Did the earth move?

JOHNNY
As a matter of fact, it did.

Cora EXITS SHOT, taking orders of food with her. Tino comes up to Johnny.

TINO
Nick's not gonna like it.

JOHNNY
Nick's got nothing to do with it.

Jorge ENTERS SHOT.

JORGE
Way to go, amigo, way to go!
He starts off to restaurant proper.

TINO
Where are you going?

JORGE
I'm on a break.

TINO
Your whole life is a break!
Jorge EXITS SHOT. Johnny turns towards Luther.

JOHNNY
You got a comment to make?
Luther smiles and shakes his head.
SHOT of Frankie at the service window.

FRANKIE
Eggs over easy twice and scramble
three with Nova Scotia.

JOHNNY
Hello to you, too.

FRANKIE
I see you made it home all right.

JOHNNY
No thanks to you. When's your
lunch break?

FRANKIE
At lunch time.

JOHNNY
We gotta talk.

FRANKIE
Look, last night was last night.

JOHNNY
I need your advice.

Nedda joins Frankie at the service window.

NEDDA

I hope you two know what you're doing. Scramble two with bacon. I mean it.

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Johnny is holding up two baseball gloves for Frankie's inspection: a catcher's mitt and an outfielder's glove.

JOHNNY

This is important. If you were a 7-year old kid which one would you want?

FRANKIE

If I was a catcher, I'd want the catcher's mitt.

JOHNNY

How many times do I have to tell you? He didn't say.

FRANKIE

Get 'em both.

JOHNNY

Yeah?

FRANKIE

And get him a couple of bats while you're at it.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Frankie and Johnny are waiting at gift wrap counter.

JOHNNY

His sister is gonna love that doll! Thanks for helping me. Do you like kids?

FRANKIE

They're okay. Come on, let's get some lunch.

JOHNNY

You look like someone who likes kids.

FRANKIE

What does someone who likes kids look like?

JOHNNY

(stares)

Why are you so tough?

FRANKIE

I don't have time for bullshit.
Come on, Santa Claus, let's go!
I'm hungry.

EXT. SMALL PARK - DAY

Frankie and Johnny are walking along the path. Frankie carries presents. Johnny is carrying a paper bag filled with sandwiches and sodas. They're in mid-conversation.

FRANKIE

You didn't miss that much not
graduating from high school. Look
at me. My big highlight was...
never mind.

JOHNNY

What?

FRANKIE

It's stupid.

JOHNNY

I've told you stupid things.

FRANKIE

Not this stupid.

JOHNNY

I like Junket. A grown man who
likes Junket, Frankie!

FRANKIE

I played Fiona in our high school
production of "BRIGADOON."

JOHNNY

What's stupid about that? I bet
you were wonderful.

FRANKIE

It's hardly like being the first
woman in outer space.

JOHNNY

I knew it! The minute I saw you,
I said to myself: "She's not just
a waitress."

FRANKIE

"Yeah, she's an unsuccessful
actress!"

JOHNNY
Would you...? You know...?
Sometime...?

FRANKIE
What?

JOHNNY
Act something for me.

FRANKIE
Are you nuts? You think actors go
around acting for people? Like we
do requests.

JOHNNY
I didn't know.

FRANKIE
Acting is an art. It's a
responsibility. It's a privilege.
She is suddenly fighting back tears.

JOHNNY
And I bet you're good at it.

FRANKIE
And it looks like I'll die with my
secret.

JOHNNY
What are you scared of?

FRANKIE
I'm not scared.

JOHNNY
Yes, you are.

FRANKIE
Well not like in a horror movie.

JOHNNY
Something's going on between us,
something important. Don't you
feel it?

FRANKIE
I don't know what I feel.

They approach an empty bench.

JOHNNY
You don't want to feel it.

Johnny sits on the bench and continues their conversation. He is leaning forward so he can look in paper bag on his lap.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
We're talking about two people coming together: sure it's a little scary but it's fucking wonderful, too, and don't pardon my French.

FRANKIE
You're too needy. I can't.

Frankie has put down her packages. She now puts her hands on the bench for support as she sits. She feels something. Stops, rises and looks at her hands. They're covered with wet, green paint from the bench. Johnny also leaps up.

JOHNNY
Cripes.

He's got green paint on the back of his pants. Frankie laughs.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
This is funny? A man ruining his clothes is funny?

FRANKIE
Yeah, it's funny.

JOHNNY
A man ruining a fifteen dollar pair of pants is funny?

Frankie continues to laugh.

FRANKIE
Yeah, it's funny. Think about it.

Johnny looks at the bench, then at his pants. Begins to smile. Looks at Frankie, starts to laugh until he's laughing as hard as Frankie. They look around and see the park PAINTER and his cart not far away.

EXT. PARK - ANOTHER ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

They are talking to the Painter at his cart. The Painter puts turpentine on a rag.

PAINTER
Here, this will clean your hands.

Frankie wipes the paint off her hands and Johnny's. The Painter continues.

PAINTER (cont'd)
The kids steal the wet paint signs.

JOHNNY
Will this stuff come off my pants?
Is it water based?

PAINTER
No, iron based. Made to last years.

FRANKIE
What's that mean?

PAINTER
(points to Johnny)
Means he's gonna break out in a rash if it keeps touching your skin...
(looks)
... like it is now.

JOHNNY
Oh shit.

PAINTER
Paint got some chemicals in it that if you get it on your skin, it goes through your pores or something.

Johnny is afraid of the above happening and has reached behind him and is holding his pants away from his skin...

JOHNNY
Can you clean it off now!

PAINTER
No problem. Take 'em off.

JOHNNY
You're kidding.

PAINTER
Hey, Sonny, I don't kid about toxic. If I clean them while you got them on, I rub the chemicals right into your butt.

Johnny hands Frankie his coat. She holds it in front of him.

JOHNNY
A grown man taking his pants off in a park. Why don't they pass a law against this paint.

PAINTER

Because they don't expect people
to sit on it.

Frankie is trying again not to laugh. As Johnny hands
the pants to the Painter.

JOHNNY

Stop laughing and help me to the
cart.

Frankie holds up the coat as Johnny goes to sit in
cart.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Johnny and Frankie finally start eating sandwiches in
cart.

JOHNNY

What was that you said over there?

FRANKIE

What?

JOHNNY

You said I was too needy?

FRANKIE

That's right. You're too needy.

JOHNNY

Hey, you got that wrong.

FRANKIE

(quiet)

Johnny, last night you had the
whole thing. There's no more
where it came from. I'm empty.

They're silent for a few beats. The Painter will over-
hear the following as he moves to get something out of
the cart.

JOHNNY

I got enough for both of us.

FRANKIE

Yeah. There's a whole other side
of you I never saw at work.

JOHNNY

You thought all I did was cook?
Your first experience with a
passionate, imaginative lover.

FRANKIE

My first experience with an animal
is more like it!

JOHNNY

Did you ever see an animal do to
another animal's toes what I did
to yours?

The Painter reacts.

FRANKIE

Will you keep your voice down?
I'm sure my whole building heard
you. Oooooo! Oooooo! Oooooo!

JOHNNY

What did you expect, the way you
kept twirling your fingers around
inside my ears?

The Painter reacts.

FRANKIE

Nobody ever put their fingers in
your ears before?

JOHNNY

Maybe for a second but not the way
you did, like you were drilling
for something.

FRANKIE

You should've said something.

JOHNNY

Are you crazy? I loved it. When
can we do it again?

FRANKIE

(to Painter)

You almost done?

PAINTER

(smiles)

I've been done but I enjoy
listening to you two talk.

They react.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Frankie enters. Nick is standing by the front door.
He makes a big display of looking at his watch.

FRANKIE

I thought the Greeks invented
democracy.

NICK

Old time Greeks and look what happened to them. Next time this happens --

Frankie EXITS SHOT as Johnny ENTERS from the front door. He is still carrying the gift wrapped toys. He wears his coat tied around his waist.

NICK (cont'd)

That goes for you, too, lover boy.

JOHNNY

Your fly's open.

He EXITS SHOT. Nick looks down, crimsos and zips up.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Johnny is finishing up cooking. Tino and Jorge are with him.

TINO

I told you Nick wouldn't like it.

Frankie comes up to the service window.

FRANKIE

Two burger deluxe and a tongue on rye.

JOHNNY

I'll pick you up at eight.

FRANKIE

I thought you were getting off early for your nephew's birthday.

JOHNNY

I'll be back tonight.

FRANKIE

I got a date.

JOHNNY

Who with?

FRANKIE

Tim, for Christ's sake!

JOHNNY

He's a fairy.

FRANKIE

I hate that word.

JOHNNY

So do I. I'm sorry. Maybe I'm
jealous.

FRANKIE

It's my bowling night.

JOHNNY

I'm a good bowler.

FRANKIE

No.

Johnny takes off his apron and gets ready to leave.

JOHNNY

I could come by after bowling.

FRANKIE

Look, I need a night to get over
last night. That was harrowing.
No, I don't mean "harrowing."
Too...

JOHNNY

Too good to be true. Frankie and
Johnny! We're already a couple.

FRANKIE

Didn't they end up killing each
other?

JOHNNY

She killed him. The odds are in
your favor... Gotta go to my
nephew's. See you later.

FRANKIE

(calls after him)

You better know how to bowl.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK - SAME DAY

A car is slowly moving down a typical, middle-class
suburban street. The homes are modest but well cared-
for. It's that special time of the day just before
dinner when the children are playing outside, the
mothers are cooking and the fathers are coming home
from work.

INT. CAR - DUSK

Johnny is at the wheel. He has a map open and is
looking for an address. The children's presents are on
the empty passenger's seat next to him.

SHOT of a house. Two children playing in front. A BOY and a GIRL.

Johnny stops the car and watches them.

SHOT of two children. They stop playing and look at the car.

SHOT of Johnny. He seems paralyzed.

SHOT of children moving cautiously to the car, even though it's not parked quite in front of their house.

The children start running towards the car now.

CHILDREN

Daddy! Daddy!

SHOT of Johnny in the car. He looks stricken.

The children have come up to the car.

SHOT of another car coming down the street.

Johnny leaps out of his car and yells after it.

JOHNNY

What's the matter with you? This is a play street!

Children are hugging Johnny. He picks them up in turn and hugs and kisses them.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - PORCH

The same man and woman we saw on the telephone earlier are standing there watching Johnny and the children. They are Sheila, Johnny's former wife, and her new husband, Clark. Sheila has an apron on. Clark is holding a newspaper.

SHOT of children surrounding Johnny. He gives the children their presents. They take their presents and race back across the street with them to their own porch.

SHOT of Sheila coming towards him.

SHOT of Johnny watching her as he gets back in car.

Sheila reaches the car. Her manner is gentle.

SHEILA

Hello, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Hi.

SHEILA
You look good.

JOHNNY
So do you.

SHEILA
It's a nice car.

JOHNNY
It's a rental. I didn't want to miss his birthday.

SHEILA
You're a month early.

JOHNNY
I'm sorry.

SHEILA
That's okay. How are you?

JOHNNY
Great.
(looks at house)
How many bedrooms?

SHEILA
Only three.

JOHNNY
Only three!

SHEILA
Elvis had thirty. Are you coming in?

JOHNNY
They looked so happy to see me.

SHEILA
Well of course they were.

JOHNNY
I didn't feel happy back. They looked like somebody else's kids.

SHOT of Clark. He is still standing on the porch, only now the children are standing with him, looking towards Johnny, Sheila and the car.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Frankie is bowling with Nedda, Cora and Tim. She has just made a strike to much acclaim and self-satisfaction.

TIM

Girl, where did you learn to bowl like that?

FRANKIE

Allentown, PA! That's about all I learned there.

JOHNNY (O.S.)

Are you from Allentown?

SHOT of Frankie reacting to the sound of Johnny's voice.

JOHNNY

That's amazing. I was born in Allentown.

Nedda, Cora and Tim variously and with different degrees of enthusiasm greet Johnny.

FRANKIE

Very funny, very funny.

JOHNNY

St. Stephen's Hospital. We lived on Martell Street.

FRANKIE

~~Frankie: I suppose you went to Moody High School, too.~~

JOHNNY

No, we moved when I was eight. I started out at Park Lane Elementary though.

Frankie almost drops her bowling ball.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Did you go to Park Lane? This is incredible. This is better than anything in Shirley MacLaine!

TIM

You're really from Allentown?

JOHNNY

Why would anyone pretend they were from Allentown?

FRANKIE

So you could keep up this coincidence theory! Don't encourage him.

But Johnny has already made himself comfortable in the curve of seats that surround the lane they are bowling at. There's plenty of beer around. The others are mellow.

JOHNNY

My mother ran off with somebody she met at an AA meeting. My father took us to Baltimore.

Johnny has a captive, rapt audience in the others. Only Frankie refuses to let herself be drawn in.

FRANKIE

It's your turn, Cora.

CORA

Just a minute.

JOHNNY

He had a sister. She couldn't cope with us. We ended up in foster homes. Could I have a swig of that?

Tim hands him his bottle of beer.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

I bounced all over the place. Washington, D.C. was the best. You go through that Smithsonian Institute they got there, really go through it, and there ain't nothing they're gonna teach you in college. Portland, Maine is nice, too. Cold though.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Johnny is bowling. He completes a strike. His form is very, very good but his body language is highly unorthodox.

TIM

Way to go, Johnny! We're ahead!

SEOT of Frankie. She's not amused.

Johnny sits on the bench between Cora and Nedda.

NEDDA

What happened to your mother?

CORA

This is so sad.

JOHNNY

I tracked her down when I was 18. They were still together, this AA turkey and her, living in Philadelphia and both drinking again.

NEDDA

They say Philadelphia will do that to you.

CORA

What happened?

JOHNNY

Nothing. I just wanted to see her. But how this pot-bellied, balding, gin-breathed stranger she was with could have been the object of anyone's desire but especially my mother's! She was still so beautiful, even through the booze, but he was 100% schlub.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

Are we bowling or what?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Johnny bowling another strike to the acclaim of Nedda and Cora. Whatever team Johnny is on is the team that is ahead.

Tim is up next. Frankie waits to follow him. Johnny comes up to her. They move away from the others now.

JOHNNY

Look, I'm going all over the place with you.

FRANKIE

I'm trying to concentrate.

JOHNNY

I might as well come right out with it: I love you. I think I'm in love with you. I personally think we should get married and I definitely want us to have kids, three or four. There! That wasn't so difficult. You don't have to say anything. I just wanted to get it out on the table. Talk about a load off!

FRANKIE

Talk about a load off? Talk about
a crock of snit.

JOHNNY

Hey, come on, Frankie, don't. One
of the things I like about you is
that you talk nice.

FRANKIE

Well, fuck you how I talk! I'll
talk any fucking way I fucking
feel like! This is my fucking
bowling night and who the fuck are
you to fucking spoil it by fucking
telling me you fucking love me!

SHOT of other bowlers who have heard Frankie raise her
voice and use "that" word.

SHOT of Cora, Nedda and Tim at the snack bar trying to
see what's going on that has the other bowlers turning
to look.

CAMERA WILL FOLLOW Frankie as she moves through the
bowling alley towards the ladies room. Johnny is
following her closely, of course.

JOHNNY

I told you I loved you. That
makes me unlovable?

FRANKIE

It makes you a creep. No, you're
not a creep. You're sincere.
That's what's so awful. "God," I
said to myself after you left,
"please make him want to see me
again without him knowing that's
what I want."

JOHNNY

I did know. God had nothing to do
with it.

FRANKIE

I said "see you again", not the
stuff you're talking about.

She pushes by him and goes into the women's changing
room. Johnny will follow in right after her.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Kids for Christ's sake!

JOHNNY

What's wrong with kids?

FRANKIE

I hate kids.

JOHNNY

I don't believe that.

FRANKIE

I'm too old to have kids.

JOHNNY

No, you're not.

FRANKIE

I can't have any. Now are you happy?

JOHNNY

We'll adopt.

FRANKIE

You don't just decide to fall in love with people out of the blue.

JOHNNY

Why not?

FRANKIE

They don't like it.

Nedda comes into the changing room.

NEDDA

What's he doing in here?

FRANKIE

How would you like it if she came up to you and said, "I'm in love with you. I want to have your baby."

JOHNNY

I'd run like hell.

NEDDA

So would I. I'm getting help.

She exits the changing room.

JOHNNY

Besides, I'd tell her I was in love with you.

FRANKIE

You don't know me.

JOHNNY

Of course I don't know you. You don't know me either. We got off to a great start. Why do you want to stop? What do you want? What do you want from a guy?

FRANKIE

(looks at him; then)

I want a guy who'll love me no matter what.

FRANKIE

You got him.

FRANKIE

Shit. This is worse than "Looking for Mr. Goodbar".

JOHNNY

Look, Frankie, I might see someone on the BMT tonight, get lucky and get laid, and think I was in love with her.

FRANKIE

Don't let me stop you.

JOHNNY

People are given one moment to connect. Not two, not three, one! I'm convinced of it.

Tim opens the door of the ladies changing room. He is too self-conscious to actually step into it, however.

TIM

What's going on here?

JOHNNY

They don't take it, it's gone forever and they end up not only pardon-my-French-for-the-very- last-time screwing that person on the BMT, but, maybe thinking they're in love and marrying her.

TIM

Okay, that's it, outta here!

He will start pulling Johnny out with him.

FRANKIE

Boy, are you parking up the wrong tree!

JOHNNY

I never thought I could be in love
with a woman who said "barking up
the wrong tree."

Tim succeeds in pulling Johnny out of the women's
changing room.

SHOT of Frankie yelling after him.

FRANKIE

You've driven me to it!

Cora comes into the changing room.

CORA

Are you all right, honey?

FRANKIE

I never used that expression in my
entire life! If I wanted a man in
my life I wouldn't have bought a
VCR I can't even work.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The place is brightly, harshly lit. There aren't too
many customers.

Frankie, still dressed from bowling, is angrily
throwing things into her shopping cart and muttering to
herself. She is brought up short by the sight of
something.

SHOT of YOUNG WOMAN in nurse's uniform (Frankie's POV).
She is wearing sunglasses. When she takes them off to
check the price of something, we (and Frankie) can see
the purple swelling around her left eye.

SHOT of Frankie, undecided what to do at first, then
quickly going over to her.

FRANKIE

Excuse me. I live in the building
behind you. I've seen how he hits
you. Is there anything I can do?

The Young Woman looks evenly at Frankie.

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't know what you're talking
about.

She puts her sunglasses back on and moves away with her
shopping cart.

SHOT of Frankie looking after her.

INT. RESTAURANT - NEXT DAY

Nick is on the telephone up by the front door.

NICK

Frankie, I do not appreciate you calling me on Saturday day to tell me you want to switch to Saturday night... Okay, I'll get somebody to cover for you and, Frankie, I know what you're sick from... I can tell him you said that? It will be my greatest pleasure.

Nick hangs up the phone, looks across the restaurant to Johnny and smiles.

NICK (cont'd)

Hey, Johnny!

SHOT of Johnny looking over at Nick.

SHOT of Nick who picks up phone again and points to it. He hangs up phone and pantomimes lots of long hair like Frankie's.

SHOT of Johnny nodding "yes."

SHOT of Nick drawing an enormous heart in the air.

SHOT of Johnny eagerly nodding "yes, go on."

SHOT of Nick triumphantly giving Johnny the finger.

SHOT of a stricken Johnny. He heads for the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Frankie is still in bed. She is surrounded with junk food and video cassettes. The phone is RINGING endlessly. Tim is with her.

TIM

You're not going to give your job up because of this guy. You were there first. I'll handle him. Now what is the problem?

FRANKIE

He says he's in love with me.

TIM

That prick!

FRANKIE
He wants to marry me.

TIM
That bastard!

FRANKIE
He's talking about a family!

TIM
Boy, you can pick 'em! Love, a
home, marriage! Fuck that shit!

He answers the phone.

TIM (cont'd)
(into phone)
Frankie says to go to hell, but I
know at least a dozen women and
quite a few men I can put you in
touch with... Johnny, give it a
rest, she doesn't want to talk...
Just a minute. He wants to know
about tonight, Saturday night, the
loneliest night of the week.

FRANKIE
I'm busy.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

Nick is behind the counter looking at Johnny at the
door. Johnny is talking to Les and Penny. He shakes
his head and shrugs. Les and Penny exit as Johnny
walks back towards the kitchen.

NICK
(refers to Les)
When they walked in, I thought
they were going to hold the joint
up.

JOHNNY
They're old friends.

Cora, dressed in her street clothes, passes.

CORA
Night, all.

JOHNNY
I thought you were working
tonight.

CORA
Naw, Frankie is switching with me
and I got myself one hot date.

NICK
All your dates are hot.

JOHNNY
Have a good one. See you Monday.

NICK
All her dates are hot.

JOHNNY
Hey, uh, Nick. I meant to ask you; I need to make some extra money and, uh, I was wondering if I could work an extra shift tonight.

NICK
What is this? The whole restaurant is switching to Saturday night. Look, Waldo works Saturday. I don't need two cooks.

JOHNNY
What if I call him and ask him to switch? If it's okay with him, is it okay with you?

NICK
Sure, but you close up.

JOHNNY
You're beautiful.

NICK
... And no overtime. Straight time.

JOHNNY
You're still beautiful.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It is Saturday night. The lights are lower than might be expected and there is a candle at each table. The crowd is younger than in the daytime and almost entirely couples.

Johnny is in the kitchen. As he works, he tries to keep his eye on Frankie who can be seen intermittently through the service window as she makes her rounds.

SHOT of Frankie heading towards the kitchen to place an order. She isn't smiling.

FRANKIE
Two turkey specials, one large, one baked.

JOHNNY
Now what did I do?

FRANKIE
You had Saturday off.

JOHNNY
So did you. We had a date.

FRANKIE
Something came up.

JOHNNY
Same with me.

FRANKIE
This isn't a date!

Another WAITRESS joins Frankie at the service window.
She is tall, thin and furtive looking.

NIGHT WAITRESS
Two burgers deluxe, a grill cheese
and an order of skins.

She EXITS SHOT.

FRANKIE
Are you keeping some big secret
from me?

JOHNNY
No, I'm not married.

FRANKIE
Men always think that's the only
question women want to ask.

JOHNNY
So fire away.

FRANKIE
Well were you?

JOHNNY
I was.

FRANKIE
How many times?

JOHNNY
Once. Is that it?

FRANKIE
Men have other secrets than being
married. You could be a mass-
murderer or an ex-convict.

JOHNNY
I am. I spent two years in the
slammer. Forgery.

FRANKIE
(pause)
That's okay.

JOHNNY
The state of Pennsylvania didn't
seem to think so.

Frankie is gathering up orders to deliver to her
customers. She is very good at balancing and juggling.

FRANKIE
You could be gay.

JOHNNY
Get real.

FRANKIE
Well you could.

She EXITS SHOT carrying her orders.

SHOT of Johnny calling after her.

JOHNNY
Does this look like a gay face?
SHOT of a startled patron reacting to this.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
What are you looking at?

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Frankie returning to the kitchen to pick up another
order. Johnny is waiting for her.

JOHNNY
No fair! What about you? Were
you ever married?

FRANKIE
No, never. I need a Chef's Salad
and a chicken salad and a side of
slaw.

JOHNNY
Anyone serious?

FRANKIE
Try "terminal." This lettuce is
limp!

JOHNNY

What happened?

FRANKIE

He got more serious with who I
thought was my best friend.

JOHNNY

How long ago was that?

FRANKIE

Seven years.

Johnny throws his spatula in the air and shakes his
head in disbelief.

JOHNNY

I've been divorced seven years.

FRANKIE

Really?

JOHNNY

Cross my heart.

VOICE

Waitress!

FRANKIE

Any kids?

JOHNNY

Two. That's who we were buying
toys for.

FRANKIE

I sort of thought so. You see
them?

JOHNNY

Not as much as I'd like. She's
remarried. I thought it was my
boy's birthday. I rented a car.
I was a month off. I didn't even
go in the house.

VOICE

Waitress!

JOHNNY

She said she's coming!

(to Frankie)

You know what I wanted to do? Run
that crewcut bastard insurance
salesman over and drive off with
the three of them. I don't know
where we would've gone. We'd
probably still be driving.

FRANKIE

That would've been a dumb thing to do.

JOHNNY

I don't let go of old things easy and I grab new things hard.

FRANKIE

Too hard.

JOHNNY

There's no such thing as too hard when you want something.

FRANKIE

Yes, there is, Johnny. The other person.

She takes up her next order and EXITS SHOT.

CLOSE on Johnny.

LONG SHOT - restaurant. A prim YOUNG COUPLE, dressed to the 9's, is dancing a slow fox trot in the aisle by their booth. Frankie passes them with a tray of orders. The MUSIC comes from the couple's portable RADIO.

FRANKIE

Hey, c'mon, you can't do that.

YOUNG MAN

(points to his girl)

She said "yes." We're getting married.

FRANKIE

Sit down.

YOUNG WOMAN

You have no romance.

The couple sits back down at their booth.

FRANKIE

Congratulations. Eat your greens.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Johnny in the kitchen, chopping and dicing. Frankie has come into the kitchen itself and stands leaning against a counter watching him work.

FRANKIE

Did you always want to be a cook?

JOHNNY

Naw, what I really want is to own my own place. You know, something like Nick's but fancier.

FRANKIE

Fancier than Nick's. Hard to believe.

JOHNNY

How about you?

FRANKIE

I was supposed to work for a second cousin who had a dental laboratory.

JOHNNY

That place down by the old train station? His son was in my class. Arnold, right?

FRANKIE

You know my cousin Arnold?

JOHNNY

Enough to say hello.

Frankie reacts to this.

FRANKIE

The dentist would take paraffin impressions of a patient's teeth and I would make plaster of Paris models for the technicians to work from.

JOHNNY

No wonder the acting bug bit!

FRANKIE

You know what I'm thinking about? You won't laugh?

JOHNNY

Of course not.

FRANKIE

A teacher.

JOHNNY

Why would I laugh at that?

FRANKIE

Someone who can't spell "cat" teaching little kids to. I'll have to go back to school first but... I don't know, it sounds nice.

Nick pokes his head into the kitchen.

NICK

That's it for tonight, dear. That new one can take care of the stiff. You want a lift?

CLOSE on Frankie.

FRANKIE

That's okay, Nick.

CLOSE on Johnny. We can almost see the relief in his face.

NICK

This morning she hated you! Now remember how I told you to close up. Good night.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RESTAURANT

It is empty. Most of the lights are off. Frankie and Johnny walk through it to the front door.

FRANKIE

Did you check the ice machine?

JOHNNY

Don't worry. I want this job. I'm gonna keep it.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Frankie and Johnny come out of the restaurant. Johnny pulls down the iron gates and locks up, Frankie helping him all the while. When they work together, they are an efficient pair.

JOHNNY

Look out for your fingers.

FRANKIE

Now you gotta say good night to someone.

JOHNNY

What?

FRANKIE

So the burglar will think someone's in there. "See you tomorrow, Tony. Don't shoot unless it's absolutely necessary." That's how Nick wants it done.

JOHNNY

"Don't listen to her, Tony, the minute you hear anything, open fire."

He starts walking off with Frankie.

FRANKIE

Where are we going?

JOHNNY

I don't know: your place or mine?

Frankie gives him such a look.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

I'm going to start warning you before I say something funny.

FRANKIE

You don't have to warn me. Just say something funny.

A woman steps in front of them from out of the shadows.

PENNY

Johnny!

CLOSE on Penny. She is pretty high on something.

JOHNNY

Penny! This is Frankie, Penny. She works in the restaurant with me.

~~JOHNNY: She's a pretty lady.~~
PENNY: She's a pretty lady.

JOHNNY

Are you all right? Where's Les?

PENNY

They busted Lester. One week! That's all we had. One lousy week. We gotta hang on to our men, pretty lady.

Penny grabs on to Frankie in a confusion of grief and anger. Johnny tries to pull her off. Penny starts screaming and yelling and pulls Frankie down onto the sidewalk with her.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie and Johnny are in the waiting area along with a group of people either waiting to be admitted or waiting for some sort of someone who has been admitted.

FRANKIE

It's not your fault. If you had lent him money, it just might have been a little longer before he stole some.

JOHNNY

It's so easy to fall out of the lifeboat, so hard to climb back on. When you do, everybody with oars is doing his damndest to keep you in the water and feed you to the sharks.

FRANKIE

Don't talk like that. You're doing fine.

JOHNNY

Sometimes I want to kill myself.

A SOCIAL WORKER comes up to them. She looks incredibly stressed-out.

SOCIAL WORKER

Why don't you come back in the morning?

JOHNNY

Is she going to be all right?

SOCIAL WORKER

What do you think?

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Frankie and Johnny are walking along. He has his arm around her. The streets are fairly deserted.

JOHNNY

I thought we were working on a full moon! It's been like this all week. Give me clear skies night and day.

FRANKIE

I've always been very suspicious of what moonlight does to people.

JOHNNY

It's supposed to make them romantic.

FRANKIE

Or turn you into a werewolf.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

My grandmother was always coming into my bedroom to make sure the blinds were down. I thought if I slept in the moonlight I'd wake up a beautiful fairy princess but she kept coming in and closing them. She always denied it was her. "Wasn't me, precious. Must have been your Guardian Angel." Remember them?

JOHNNY

What do you mean, "remember"?

FRANKIE

One night I decided to stay awake and catch her in the act. It seemed like forever. When you're that age, you don't have anything to stay awake about. So you're failing geography, so what?

Johnny stops walking. Frankie keeps walking.

JOHNNY

You are so fabulous!

FRANKIE

Shut up. She had to lean across the bed to close the blinds. Her bosom was so close to my face. She smelled so nice. I took the deepest breath of her I could. In that one moment, I think I knew what it was like to be loved. Really loved. I was so safe, so protected. That's better than being pretty. The next thing I knew it was morning and I still didn't look like Audrey Hepburn. Now when I lie in bed with the moonlight spilling in, I'm not thinking I want to be somebody else, I just want my Nana back.

JOHNNY

You called your grandmother Nana, too?

They have stopped in front of Frankie's building. Johnny waits as Frankie fishes for her keys.

FRANKIE

It's not that unusual!

JOHNNY
It's incredible!

FRANKIE
You're nuts.

JOHNNY
I for one am very glad you didn't wake up Audrey Hepburn. She's too thin. People should have meat on their bones.

He kisses her.

FRANKIE
Aren't you coming up?

INT. FRANKIE'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frankie and Johnny are climbing up the stairs to her apartment.

FRANKIE
I don't know why we're talking about Dennis Coleman. I haven't thought about him in --

JOHNNY
It doesn't matter. Go ahead. So seven years ago, Dennis left you for who you thought was your best friend?

FRANKIE
You know the main thing I felt was? Dumb! I even introduced them. I lent them money. I gave her my old television set. They're probably watching it together at this very moment. I hope it explodes and blows their faces off. That or he's telling her she looks like shit or who told her she could change her hair or where are his car keys or snut up, he's had a rough day. I didn't know how exhausting it was having a woman support you! God, why do we get involved with people it turns out hate us?

JOHNNY
Because...

FRANKIE
Because we hate ourselves. I know. I read the same book.

They have stopped in front of Frankie's apartment door on the third floor.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
You're not staying over!

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Johnny and Frankie are kissing. It quickly gets passionate. Frankie starts to unbutton her blouse.

JOHNNY
Let me do it.

He starts to undress her.

FRANKIE
Did you bring some --?

JOHNNY
Yes.

Johnny is having a little difficulty undressing her. At the same time, she is undressing him. They start getting tangled, so they start undressing themselves. Johnny is very quick at it.

Frankie is still undressing when Johnny begins turning off all the lights.

FRANKIE
I want to see you this time.

JOHNNY
I don't like to make love with the

lights on.

FRANKIE
Why not?

JOHNNY
I can't.

FRANKIE
That's a good reason.

JOHNNY
It's because of Archie.

FRANKIE
Okay, I'll bite. Who's Archie?

JOHNNY
A huge Great Dane at one of my foster homes. I mean, massive!
(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Whenever I'd jack off, he'd just stare at me. At it. Talk about serious castration complex. So I got in the habit of doing it with the lights off.

FRANKIE

Sometimes I am so glad I'm a girl. Give me a hand with the bed.

They are much better at getting the bed down than they were the night before. This time Johnny remembers where the pillows are.

JOHNNY

I'm forty-two.

FRANKIE

You look younger. I'm thirty-seven.

JOHNNY

So do you. I'm forty-four.

FRANKIE

Honest.

JOHNNY

I'll be forty-six the tenth of next month.

FRANKIE

What do you want for your birthday?

JOHNNY

To be able to stop bullshitting about things like my age.

FRANKIE

I'll be thirty-nine on the eleventh.

JOHNNY

We're both Scorpions.

FRANKIE

Figures!

Johnny turns out another lamp. Frankie is turning on the RADIO by the bed. The same classical station is on.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

I'm the one who ought to be hiding from the light. Me and my goddamn cellulite.

JOHNNY

Don't be silly.

FRANKIE

Yeah? You be a woman and have
someone give you cellulite and see
how you like it.

He goes to the window to close the blinds.

SHOT of a full moon illuminating the back courtyard of
Frankie's apartment house.

SHOT of Johnny, enraptured by it. The moonlight is
bathing his body.

JOHNNY

There's our full moon!

SHOT of Frankie in bed, under the covers.

FRANKIE

I ordered it just for you.
Macy's. Twenty-five bucks an
hour.

JOHNNY

Look at it.

FRANKIE

Later.

JOHNNY

It won't be there later. You can
almost see it move.

Frankie has joined him at the window. They are both
bathed in the moonlight. Frankie's eyes go to the
apartment with the battling couple.

SHOT of Frankie's backyard. All the apartment windows
are dark this time.

SHOT of Frankie.

FRANKIE

All quiet on the Western Front.
Come on.

Frankie moves back to the bed and gets under the
covers.

SHOT of Johnny still staring out the window.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

I want you to make love to me.

Johnny turns to her.

JOHNNY

I want to make love to you.

He starts towards the bed. Just as he gets there, Frankie barks loudly. Johnny jumps back. Frankie breaks into peals of laughter.

FRANKIE

It was a joke. I'm sorry.

Johnny gets into bed with her.

CLOSE on the radio by the bed. It is playing DeBussy's "Clair de Lune".

CLOSE on Frankie and Johnny as they begin to cuddle and kiss.

FRANKIE

Did you get Easter off?

JOHNNY

No. You have the most... the most wonderful breasts.

FRANKIE

Thank you. Last Easter you could've shot moose in there. Forget tips.

JOHNNY

Put your arms around me. Tighter. Do you like doing that?

FRANKIE

I don't mind.

JOHNNY

We touch our own bodies and nothing happens. Something to do with electrons. We short-circuit ourselves. Stroke my tits. There!

FRANKIE

Did your first wife do this for you?

JOHNNY

Only wife.

FRANKIE

Okay, so I was fishing.

JOENNY
No, checking.

FRANKIE
(looks down at him)
You're not.

JOENNY
I will be.

FRANKIE
We don't have to.

JOENNY
I want to.

FRANKIE
It's okay if we don't.

JOENNY
I want to.

FRANKIE
That's nice music.

JOENNY
You don't have to change the
subject.

FRANKIE
I'm not. That music makes me
think of grace.

JOENNY
You mean, the thing it's good to
be in the state of?

FRANKIE
The movement kind.

JOENNY
This is the first time this has
ever happened to me. I swear to
God.

FRANKIE
I believe you. What do you want
to kill yourself about sometimes?

JOENNY
Right now? My limp dick. I'm
kidding, I'm kidding!
(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I want to kill myself sometimes
when I think I'm the only person
in the world and the part of me
that feels that way is trapped
inside this body that only bumps
into other bodies without ever
connecting with the only other
person in the world trapped inside
of them. We gotta connect. We
just have to. Or we die.

FRANKIE

We're connecting.

JOHNNY

Are we?

FRANKIE

I am. I feel very...

JOHNNY

Say it.

FRANKIE

I don't know what it is.

JOHNNY

Say it anyway.

FRANKIE

Protective, but that's crazy!

JOHNNY

It's nice.

FRANKIE

I'm looking for somebody to take
care of me this time.

JOHNNY

We all are.

FRANKIE

Why do we keep going from one
subject I don't like to another
subject?

JOHNNY

Hey, I'm being nice and Bingo! the
armor goes up.

FRANKIE

What about your armor?

JOHNNY

I don't have any.

FRANKIE

Everybody has armor. They'd be dead if they didn't.

JOHNNY

Bloody but unbowed.

FRANKIE

Besides, I wasn't talking about you. You know, not everybody thinks life is a picnic. Some of us have problems. Some of us have sorrows. But people like you are so busy telling us what you want, how you feel, you don't even notice the rest of us who aren't exactly jumping up and down singing "Yankee Doodle Dandy".

Frankie gets out of bed.

JOHNNY

I haven't done anything but notice you.

Frankie starts turning all the lights in the room on.

FRANKIE

I want you to go.

JOHNNY

Why?

FRANKIE

I want to be alone. I want to watch television. I want to eat ice cream. I want to sleep. I want to stop worrying I'm trapped in my own apartment with a fucking maniac.

Johnny is following right behind her, turning the lights back off.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

What are you doing?

JOHNNY

Sooner or later, you're gonna have to deal with me. Why don't we just get it over with? Besides, tomorrow's Sunday. We can sleep in.

FRANKIE

I am trapped in my own apartment with a real maniac.

Johnny has gone to the telephone and punch dialed a number.

JOHNNY

I owe you a quarter!

FRANKIE

All I have to do is open that window and start screaming!

JOHNNY

In this city? Lots of luck.

(into phone)

Information? The number of WKCC.

(to Frankie)

I'm going to get the name of that piece of music you liked.

FRANKIE

I don't care anymore.

JOHNNY

I hate these recordings that give you the number now. One less human contact.

Frankie has started to get dressed.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Where are you going?

FRANKIE

Out! And you better not be here when I get back.

JOHNNY

You want to pick up some Eagen-Daz Vanilla Swiss Almond --

Frankie starts throwing things at him. Johnny is trying to keep his cool but Frankie is furious and she is throwing things hard. Johnny will have to duck.

JOHNNY

That was a little joke. No, that was a little bad joke.

FRANKIE

I said get out! You're a maniac! You're a creep!

JOHNNY

(into phone)

Hello, Midnight with Marlon?

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

My name is Johnny and I would like the name of that particular piece of piano music you were just playing so I can buy the record and present it to my lady love, whose name is Frankie and is that a beautiful coincidence or is it not? Debussy. Claude Debussy, right? I heard of him. "Clair de Lune".

(to Frankie)

You gonna remember this?

Frankie reacts by slapping him hard across the cheek.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

(into phone)

Just a minute.

Johnny takes the phone from his ear and holds it against his chest. He just looks at Frankie. She smacks him again. Hard. His eyes smart with tears. He catches her hand before she can hit him again.

FRANKIE

Why are you doing this?

JOHNNY

I'm tired of looking. Everything I want is in this room.

Frankie lets him pull her down to where he is sitting on the sofa-bed.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

(into phone)

There's a man and a woman. She's a waitress. He's a cook. They meet but they don't connect. "I got two medium burgers working" and "Pick up, side of fries" is pretty much the extent of it. But she noticed him, he could feel it, and he noticed her. They both knew it was gonna happen. They made love and for maybe an hour they forgot the ten million things that make people think "I don't love this person. I don't even like them." Instead, they were together and it was perfect and they were perfect and that's all there was to know about it.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Only now she's beginning to forget all that. Pretty soon he will, too. So would you play an encore for Frankie and Johnny in the hope of something that ought to last, and not self-destruct? It seemed like the most beautiful music ever written so dedicate it to us.

Johnny hangs up. He kisses Frankie.

FRANKIE

Why me?

JOHNNY

Why not you?

FRANKIE

You don't know me.

JOHNNY

Yes, I do. And you know me. It scares people how much we really know one another, so we pretend we don't. Are you listening to me?

FRANKIE

I'm trying very hard not to!

JOHNNY

That's your trouble. You don't want to hear anything you don't think you already know. Don't throw me away like a gum wrapper because you think there's something about me you may not like. We have a chance to make everything turn out all right again. Turn our back on everything that went wrong. I know this thing, Frankie.

Frankie sits up on the edge of the bed.

FRANKIE

I want to show you something.

She pushes her hair back.

CLOSE on Frankie's scalp. There is a scar.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

He did that. The man I told you about.

CLOSE on Johnny reacting to the sight of it.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
With a belt buckle.

Johnny kisses the scar.

JOHNNY
It's gone now.

FRANKIE
It'll never go.

JOHNNY
It's gone. I made it go.

FRANKIE
What are you? My guardian angel?

JOHNNY
It seems to me the right people
are our guardian angels.

Frankie has started to cry.

FRANKIE
I wanted things too, you know.

So has Johnny. He is so happy.

JOHNNY
I know.

FRANKIE
A man, a family, kids. He's the
reason I can't have any.

JOHNNY
He's gone. Choose me. Hurry up.
It's getting light out. I turn
into a pumpkin.

SHOT of the window. The first traces of dawn are
apparent.

FRANKIE
It is getting light out.

She goes to the window and looks out.

JOHNNY
You are so beautiful standing
there.

FRANKIE
The only time I saw the sun come
up with a guy was my senior prom.
His name was Johnny Di Corso but
everyone called him Skunk. You
got a nickname?

Johnny shakes his head.

JOHNNY

You got to be really popular or
really unpopular to have a
nickname.

FRANKIE

I'll give you a nickname.

Johnny comes up to her, puts his arms around her and
begins to move her in a slow dance step. He begins to
hum.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

You're not going to like me saying
this but you're a terrible dancer.

JOHNNY

I know.

Johnny goes right on happily humming.

FRANKIE

What's that supposed to be?

JOHNNY

Something from "Brigadoon".

FRANKIE

That isn't from "Brigadoon". That
isn't even remotely from anything.

Frankie sings softly.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

That's something from "Brigadoon".
You can't have kids in a place
this size. How big is your place?

JOHNNY

Even smaller. We'll be a nice
snug family. It'll be wonderful.

Johnny has slow dances Frankie to the sofa-bed. The
room is being quickly flooded with sunlight. He kisses
her very gently.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

All systems go.

FRANKIE

I noticed. Just a minute.

She goes into the bathroom and closes the door. Johnny
turns off all the room lights. He starts to close the
blinds but instead raises them even higher. Sunlight
pours across him.

SHOT of Frankie's backyard. There are a few scraggly trees in the courtyard but mainly there is concrete. We notice the jungle of fire escapes and barred windows that are peculiar to big cities but especially New York.

CLOSE on Johnny.

JOHNNY
(calling off)
Did you see the robins?

CUT TO:

Frankie in the bathroom. She hasn't heard him. She is studying herself in the medicine cabinet mirror. She has put on her best robe, a brightly patterned silk one. Still staring at herself, she begins to brush her hair.

CUT TO:

Johnny in the room. He is tidying up the sofa-bed. Straightening the sheets, fluffing the pillows.

CLOSE on radio.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE
... so although it's against my policy to play requests, there's an exception to every rule. I don't know if this is the most beautiful music ever written, Frankie and Johnny --

SHOT of Johnny hearing this. He turns up the volume on the radio.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE
(continuing)
-- and how I wish that really were your names but I know when my leg is being pulled -- but, God, how I wish you two really existed.

JOHNNY
(calling off)
He's talking about us!

CUT TO:

SHOT of Frankie in the bathroom. She is still at the mirror. She doesn't hear him.

CUT TO:

SHOT of radio.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

Maybe I'm crazy but I'd still like
to believe in love. Why the hell
do you think I work these hours?

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

MIDNIGHT WITH MARLON is a totally nondescript man who has spent the evening smoking too many cigarettes and drinking too many Diet Cokes. Neither he nor his broadcasting room bear the remotest resemblance to the silky, smoky, sexy voice we have been listening to.

ANNOUNCER

Anyway, you two moonbeams,
whoever, wherever you are,
whatever you're doing, here's an
encore.

He sets the tone arm on the record. Debussy's "Clair de Lune" is heard again. He leans back in his chair, stretches, yawns and looks at his watch.

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Johnny sits listening to the music. He looks up.

SHOT of Frankie coming out of the bathroom. Even though she is brushing her teeth, she looks quite lovely in the new bathrobe.

FRANKIE

I want to get this. What's it
called?

JOHNNY

You just walk into a record shop
and ask for the most beautiful
music ever written.

FRANKIE

Watch us end up with something
from "The Sound of Music". You
want to brush?

JOHNNY

That means you want me to brush!

Frankie steps aside as Johnny passes her to go into the bathroom.

SHOT of the bathroom door closing.

SHOT of Frankie.

FRANKIE
 (calling off to him)
 Don't worry! It's never been
 used.

SHOT of Johnny in the bathroom. He is looking at himself in the mirror.

SHOT of Frankie. Still brushing her teeth, she moves to the window and looks out to her backyard.

SHOT of Frankie's backyard. It has gotten even lighter.

SHOT of Frankie smiling.

FRANKIE
 (calling off)
 Did you see the robins?

SHOT of the apartment where the man in early scenes had struck the nurse girlfriend. He is sprawled out in his chair, passed out. The closet door behind him is open. The closet is empty. All the nurse's uniforms are gone.

SHOT of Johnny in the bathroom. He hasn't heard her. he begins to brush his teeth. He turns from the sink when he notices a man's bathrobe hanging on the back of the door. He touches it.

CUT TO:

Frankie. She is sitting on the sofa-bed listening to the music and brushing her teeth.

FRANKIE
 This I can see why people call
 pretty.

A little gasp of pleasure escapes her.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
 Mmmmmmm!

SHOT of bathroom door opening. Johnny comes out. He is brushing his teeth.

JOHNNY
 I'm not going to ask whose robe
 that is.

Frankie is really listening to the music.

FRANKIE
 Ssshhh!

JOHNNY
We should get something with
fluoride.

FRANKIE
Sssh, I said!

JOHNNY
Anti-tartar build-up, too.

FRANKIE
Johnny!

Johnny sits next to her on the bed. They are both
brushing their teeth and listening to the music.

CUT TO:

INT. CORA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cora is sleeping. The man in bed with her is snoring
loudly.

The Debussy continues.

CUT TO:

INT. NEDDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nedda's eyes are open. She tosses fitfully.

The Debussy continues.

CUT TO:

INT. JORGE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jorge and his girlfriend are making love. It looks
like they've been at it all night.

The Debussy continues.

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tim and Bobby are asleep in each other's arms. Tim's
dog is asleep on the bed with them.

The Debussy continues.

CUT TO:

INT. LUTHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Luther is asleep. His wife is awake. She strokes and
holds him. She smiles to herself. She is happy.

The Debussy continues.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANKIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE on the radio. The Debussy is playing.

SHOT of Frankie and Johnny on the sofa-bed. The room is quite bright. They continue to brush their teeth. They stop and look at each other. They smile with toothbrushes in their mouths. The Debussy is ending.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE was first produced by Manhattan Theatre Club Stage II at City Center in New York City on June 2nd 1987, with the following cast:

FRANKIE Kathy Bates
JOHNNY F. Murray Abraham
VOICE OF RADIO ANNOUNCER... Dominic Cuskern

It transferred to Manhattan Theatre Club Stage I at City Center on October 14th 1987, with the following cast:

FRANKIE Kathy Bates
JOHNNY Kenneth Welsh
VOICE OF RADIO ANNOUNCER... Dominic Cuskern

Both productions were directed by Paul Benedict. Sets by James Noone. Costumes by David Woolard. Lighting by David Noling. Sound by John Gromada. The Production Stage Manager was Pamela Singer.

This production transferred to the Westside Arts Theatre in New York City on December 4th 1987. It was produced by Steven Baruch, Thomas Viertel, Richard Frankel and Juncyn Theatres/Margo Lion.

TIME

The present.

PLACE

New York City.

SETTING

Frankie's one-room apartment in a walk-up tenement in the west 50's. The fourth wall looks onto the backyard and the apartments behind. When the sofa bed is down, as it is for much of the play, the room is quite cramped.

CHARACTERS

FRANKIE—Striking but not conventional good looks. She has a sense of humor and a fairly tough exterior. She is also frightened and can be very hard to reach.

JOHNNY—Johnny's best feature is his personality. He works at it. He is in good physical condition.

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE

ACT ONE

AT RISE: Darkness. We hear the sounds of a man and woman making love. They are getting ready to climax. The sounds they are making are noisy, ecstatic and familiar. Above all, they must be graphic. The intention is a portrait in sound of a passionate man and woman making love and reaching climax together.

The real thing.

They came.

*Silence. Heavy breathing. We become aware that the radio has been playing Bach's Goldberg Variations in the piano version.**

By this point, the curtain has been up for at least two minutes. No light, no dialogue, just the sounds of love-making and now the Bach.

FRANKIE. God, I wish I still smoked. Life used to be so much more fun. (*Johnny laughs softly.*) What?

JOHNNY. Nothing. (*He laughs again, a little louder.*) Oh, God!

FRANKIE. Well it must be something!

JOHNNY. It's dumb, it's gross, it's stupid, it's ... (*He howls with laughter.*) I'm sorry. Jesus, this is terrible. I don't know what's gotten into me. I'll be all right. (*He catches his*

*See Special Note on copyright page.

breath. *Frankie turns on a bedside lamp.*) Really, I'm sorry. It has nothing to do with you.

FRANKIE. Are you okay now?

JOHNNY. Yes. Nol (*He bursts into laughter again. And now Frankie bursts into laughter: a wild, uncontrollable, infectious sound.*) What are you laughing at?

FRANKIE. I don't know! (*Now they are both laughing hilariously. It is the kind of laughter that gets out of control and people have trouble breathing. Frankie rolls off the bed and lands on the floor with a slight thud.*)

JOHNNY. Are you okay?

FRANKIE. Nol (*Now it is Frankie who is laughing solo. It is a wonderfully joyful sound: a lot of stored-up feeling is being released.*)

JOHNNY. Should I get you something?

FRANKIE. Yes! My mother!

JOHNNY. A beer, a Coke anything?

FRANKIE. A bag to put over my head!

JOHNNY. You really want your mother?

FRANKIE. Are you crazy?

JOHNNY. You have the most . . . the most wonderful breasts.

FRANKIE. Thank you. (*She bursts into new laughter. This time Johnny doesn't join in at all. Eventually they are both still. They listen to the Bach in silence and without moving.*) That's nice music. Very . . . I want to say "chaste."

JOHNNY. I'll tell you why I was laughing. All of a sudden—just like that—I remembered this time back in high school when I was making out with this really beautiful girl and was feeling incredibly suave and sophisticated and wondering if anybody would believe my good fortune and worrying if she was going to let me go all the way—I think it would have been her first time too—when all of a sudden I let out this incredibly loud fart. Like that. Only louder. It was awful. (*He laughs again.*) And there was no pretending it wasn't me. You couldn't say something like "Boy, did you hear that thunder?" or "Jesus, Peggy was that you?" The best I could come up with was "May I use your bathroom?" which only made it worse. And there in the bathroom was her mother taking a bath at ten o'clock at night. She had one

arm up, washing her armpit. I said something real cool like, "Hello Mrs. Roberts." She screamed and I ran out of the house. I tripped over the garbage cans and tore my pants climbing over the backyard fence. I must've run twenty blocks, most of them with dogs chasing me. I thought my life was over. We never mentioned what happened and I never dated her again and I lost my virginity with someone else. But why that fart banged back into my consciousness just then . . . !

FRANKIE. Could we change the subject?

JOHNNY. What's the matter?

FRANKIE. I'm not a prude . . .

JOHNNY. I know that! Any woman who . . .

FRANKIE. I just . . . we all draw the line somewhere.

JOHNNY. And with you it's farts?

FRANKIE. Is that going to be a problem?

JOHNNY. You don't think any kind of farting is funny?

FRANKIE. Not off the top of my head I don't.

JOHNNY. Huh! I always have. I don't know why I find a lot of things funny. Like Corgies.

FRANKIE. Corgies?

JOHNNY. You know the dogs the Queen of England has? FRANKIE. No.

JOHNNY. Sure you do. They're about this big, tan and look like walking heads. Everytime I see one, I get hysterical. Show me a Corgie and I'm yours.

FRANKIE. I guess a farting Corgie would really lay you out! JOHNNY. See? You do have a sense of humor about it! (*They both laugh. Then silence. The Bach plays on.*)

FRANKIE. You know what I mean? About the music? It's pure.

JOHNNY. Did you come?

FRANKIE. No one's that good at faking it.

JOHNNY. I thought so. Good. I'm glad.

FRANKIE. There! Hear that? It makes me think of . . . grace.

JOHNNY. You mean, the thing it's good to be in the state of? FRANKIE. The movement kind. You know. . . . (*She moves her arm in a flowing gesture and sways her shoulders to the music.*) Flowing.

JOHNNY. So why were you laughing?
 FRANKIE. I don't know. Because you were, I guess. You sounded so happy. Little did I know!
 JOHNNY. I was happy. I'm still happy. Where are you going?
 FRANKIE. Nowhere.
 JOHNNY. You're going somewhere.
 FRANKIE. The closet.
 JOHNNY. Why?
 FRANKIE. A robe.
 JOHNNY. You don't need a —.
 JOHNNY. I'm cold.
 JOHNNY. I want to bask in your nakedness.
 FRANKIE. Sure you do. (*Frankie turns on the overhead room light.*)
 JOHNNY. Owl
 FRANKIE. I'm sorry, I'm sorry! (*She turns off the overhead light. The first quick impression we have of the room is that it is modest and not especially tidy.*)
 JOHNNY. Warn somebody when you're going to do that! I hate bright lights but especially right after making love. Talk about a mood changer! Besides, I think you see the other person better in the light of the afterglow. (*Pause.*) Did you hear what I just said?
 FRANKIE. Yes.
 JOHNNY. Just checking. (*While Frankie gets robe out of the closet, Johnny goes through her purse on the bed table until he finds a pair of sunglasses.*)
 FRANKIE. Remember when everybody used to light up the second it seemed they were through making love? "I'm coming, I'm coming, I came. You got a match?"
 JOHNNY. I didn't smoke.
 FRANKIE. Never?
 JOHNNY. Ever.
 FRANKIE. You've got a smoker's personality.
 JOHNNY. That's what they tell me.
 FRANKIE. I just made that up.
 JOHNNY. So did I. And I didn't like women who did.
 FRANKIE. Did what? Smoked? Then you would have hated me. Marla the Human Furnace.

JOHNNY. Marla? I thought your name was Francis.
 FRANKIE. It is, it is! Don't panic. I just made that up, too. I don't know where it came from. From what Freudian depth it sprung.
 JOHNNY. Marla! Ecchhl
 FRANKIE. You put too much stock in this name business, John. (*She comes back to bed wearing a bathrobe. Johnny looks fairly ridiculous in her sunglasses.*)
 JOHNNY. It's Johnny, please.
 FRANKIE. Are those mine? I wish you'd stay out of my —
 JOHNNY. I hate John.
 FRANKIE. Did you hear me?
 JOHNNY. I heard you.
 FRANKIE. I wish you'd act like you heard me.
 JOHNNY. May I wear your sunglasses?
 FRANKIE. Yes.
 JOHNNY. Thank you. God, you're beautiful. Are you coming back to bed?
 FRANKIE. I don't know.
 JOHNNY. John sounds like a toilet or a profession. And Jack only works if you're a Kennedy or a Nicholson.
 FRANKIE. I read somewhere there are millions of young people, a whole generation, who don't have a clue who John Kennedy was. Do you believe it? To me, he was only yesterday. I love Jack Nicholson. Did you see *Prizzi's Honor*?
 JOHNNY. Six times.
 FRANKIE. Six times?
 JOHNNY. The first time I popped for it, six bucks, the good old days, remember them? Seven bucks gets my goat, don't get me started! Then five on VCR, you know a rental, when I was getting over my hernia and I couldn't get out of bed so hot.
 FRANKIE. You've got a VCR?
 JOHNNY. Oh sure. Stereo TV, VCR. I'm working on a dish.
 FRANKIE. And you've got a hernia?
 JOHNNY. Had, had. Here, I'll show you.
 FRANKIE. Wow. That's big. Did it hurt?
 JOHNNY. Comme ça, comme ça. You got any scars?
 FRANKIE. Everybody has scars.

JOHNNY. Where? I'll just look.
 FRANKIE. No.
 JOHNNY. Okay, okay. You know, they filmed it right near where I live.
 FRANKIE. *Prizzi's Honor?*
 JOHNNY. Oh sure.
 FRANKIE. In Brooklyn?
 JOHNNY. Brooklyn Heights. Please, don't get us confused with the rest of the borough. Would you like it if I referred to your neighborhood as Chinatown?
 FRANKIE. Fifty-third and Tenth?
 JOHNNY. Anyway! You know the house that guy lived in, the one with the funny voice? Hinley or something? He got nominated for an Oscar or something but I don't think he won. Or maybe he did.
 FRANKIE. The one who played the Don?
 JOHNNY. That's the one. Headley, Henkley, Hinley.
 FRANKIE. You live in that house?
 JOHNNY. No, but I can see their roof from my bathroom window.
 FRANKIE. Oh.
 JOHNNY. You know what those movie stars get when they're on location like that? Their own trailers with their name on the door. Big long trailers. Not like the kind you see in Montauk, those ugly little Airstream jobbies. At least I think they're ugly. No, these are the big long kind like you see sitting up on blocks in a trailer park that people live in full time, people who aren't going anywhere in 'em they're so big! I'm talking trailers with bedrooms and bathtubs. I'm talking major mobile homes.
 FRANKIE. I hate trailers.
 JOHNNY. So do I. That's not the point.
 FRANKIE. I'd rather die than live in a trailer. The very words "mobile home" strike me with such terror.
 JOHNNY. I believe I had the floor.
 FRANKIE. Who the hell wants a living room that moves for Christ's sake? Ecch! Sorry.
 JOHNNY. Anyway, they each have their own trailer. I mean, Jack Nicholson is on one side of the street in his block-long trailer and Kathleen Turner is on the other in hers.

FRANKIE. I'm sorry but I don't get her message.
 JOHNNY. Will you let me finish?
 FRANKIE. Do you?
 JOHNNY. Yes, but that's not the point either. They also give these trailers to people you never even heard of, like this Hinley, Headley, Henkley, what's-his-face character.
 FRANKIE. Is that the point?
 JOHNNY. I'm not saying he's not a good actor but his own trailer? I'm in the wrong business.
 FRANKIE. We both are.
 JOHNNY. Do you think I talk too much?
 FRANKIE. I don't think you always give the other person a chance to —
 JOHNNY. That's what my best friend says. "I talk because I got a lot to say, Ernie," I tell him but he doesn't seem to understand that. Talking to you comes real easy. I appreciate that. And I won't pretend I wasn't looking forward to this evening.
 FRANKIE. Well, it's been very. . .
 JOHNNY. What do you mean, "been"? It still is. "The night is young, the stars are clear and if you care to go walking, dear." I admit I love the sound of my own voice. So shoot me, give me the electric chair, it ain't over till the fat lady sings. Can I have a beer?
 FRANKIE. I'm sorry.
 JOHNNY. You say that too much. (*He goes to refrigerator as Frankie crosses to floor lamp by easy chair and turns it on.*)
 FRANKIE. Is this okay? I hate gloom.
 JOHNNY. Light like this is fine. It's the harsh blinding kind I can't stand. Now where are you going?
 FRANKIE. Just in here. (*She goes to bathroom door, opens it, turns on light, goes in, leaving door open so that more light spills into the room.*) Keep talking. I can hear you.
 JOHNNY. You mean about the light? There are some delicatessens I just won't go into, they're so bright. There's one over on Madison Avenue and 28th Street that is so bright from the overhead fluorescents that you wouldn't believe it. I complained. I don't even shop there and I complained. "What are you trying to do? Get an airplane to land in here?" They just looked at me like I was an idiot. Of course, I doubt

if they even spoke English. Most Koreans don't. It's getting to the point where you can count on one hand the number of people who speak English in this city. (*He goes to bathroom door and stands watching Frankie within*) Look, I know I talk too much. It's just that certain things get my goat. Things like ninety-foot trailers for people I never heard of . . . (*Frankie comes out of the bathroom. She has changed into a brightly-colored kimono. She has a hairbrush in her hand and will brush her hair during the following.*) Hi there.

FRANKIE. Hello.

JOHNNY. . . . waste, especially water—you got a leaky faucet around here? Lady, I'm your plumber—and the fact this is supposed to be an English speaking nation only nobody speaks English anymore. Other than that, I'm cool and I'll shut up now and won't say another word. I'm locking my mouth and throwing away the key. (*He watches Frankie brush her hair.*)

FRANKIE. Did you get Easter off? (*Johnny shakes his head.*) Neither did I. And watch us twiddle our thumbs. Last Easter you could've shot moose in there. Forget tips. I've already decided, I'm gonna call in sick. Life's too short, you know? You want some juice? It's homemade. I mean, I squeezed it myself. That's right, you're working on a beer. I'd offer you a joint but I don't do that anymore. Not that I think other people shouldn't. It's just that I can't personally handle it anymore. I mean, I didn't like what it was doing to me. I mean, the bottom line is: it isn't good for you. For me. I mean. It isn't good for me. Hey, come on, don't!

JOHNNY. Can I say one more thing?

FRANKIE. I wish you would.

JOHNNY. I could watch you do that for maybe the rest of my life.

FRANKIE. Get real.

JOHNNY. I think a woman brushing and fixing her hair is one of the supremely great sights of life. I'd put it up there with the Grand Canyon and a mother nursing her child. Triumphant facts of nature. That's all. Now I'm locking my eyes shut and throwing away the key. (*He closes his eyes.*)

FRANKIE. What am I supposed to do?

JOHNNY. Shh, pretend you can't hear. Next thing she'll want is your ears.

FRANKIE. Oh my God, it's three o'clock! Look, I'd ask you to stay over but . . . I don't know about you but I'm kind of drained, you know? I mean, that was pretty intense back there. Harrowing. No, not harrowing, that doesn't sound right. I'm too pooped to pop, all right? Oh come on, you know what I mean! (*Johnny inhales very slowly and very deeply.*)

JOHNNY. She's wearing something new. This part is called Scent Torture. I love it, I love it!

FRANKIE. You know, you're a very intense person. One minute you're making love like somebody just let you out of jail and the next you're telling me watching me brush my hair is like the Grand Canyon. Very intense or very crazy. Look, I'm glad what happened happened. If we both play our cards right, maybe it will happen again. . . . Hello?

JOHNNY. I hear you.

FRANKIE. I wish you'd open your eyes. (*Johnny very slowly opens his eyes and turns to face Frankie. He reacts as if blinded.*)

JOHNNY. Aaaagggg! It's worse than the delicatessen! Such blinding beauty!

FRANKIE. I'm serious. (*Johnny stops screaming and looks at her again.*)

JOHNNY. (*Quietly.*) So am I.

FRANKIE. That's exactly what I mean. One minute you're kidding and the next you're looking at me like that.

JOHNNY. Like what?

FRANKIE. Like that! People don't go around looking at one another like that. It's too intense. You don't look, you stare. It gives me the creeps. I suppose it's very flattering but it's not something I feel real comfortable with. It's like if you would send me a million roses, I'd be impressed but I wouldn't know where to put them. I don't need a million roses. One would be just fine. So if you just looked at me *occasionally* in the future like that. Look, obviously I like you. I like you a lot. What's the matter?

JOHNNY. I'm just drinking all this in.

FRANKIE. You're not the easiest person to talk to anybody ever met.

JOHNNY. I certainly hope not. How old are you?
 FRANKIE. None of your business. How old are you?
 JOHNNY. What do you think?
 FRANKIE. Mid-forties.
 JOHNNY. Ouch!
 FRANKIE. Maybe late thirties.
 JOHNNY. I can live with that.
 FRANKIE. Come on, how old are you?
 JOHNNY. I don't know.
 FRANKIE. Everybody knows how old they are.
 JOHNNY. I used to, then I forgot.
 FRANKIE. That's a great answer. Can I borrow it?
 JOHNNY. I did.
 FRANKIE. Who from?
 JOHNNY. Some old lady on the Carson show? I don't remember. Half the things I got up here, I don't remember where they came from. It doesn't seem fair. People ought to get credit for all the things they give and teach us. You're fabulous.
 FRANKIE. I feel like I'm supposed to say "thank you."
 JOHNNY. It's not necessary.
 FRANKIE. Instead, I want to ask you to quit sneaking up on me like that. We're talking about one thing, people who teach, and wham! you slip in there with some kind of intimate, personal remark. I like being told I'm fabulous. Who wouldn't? I'd like some warning first, that's all. This is not a spontaneous person you have before you.
 JOHNNY. You're telling me that wasn't spontaneous?
 FRANKIE. That was different. I'm talking about the larger framework of things. What people are doing in your life. What they're doing in your bed is easy or at least it used to be back before we had to start checking each other out. I don't know about you but I get so sick and tired of living this way, that we're gonna die from one another, that every so often I just want to act like Saturday night really is a Saturday night, the way they used to be.
 JOHNNY. I'm very glad we had this Saturday night.
 FRANKIE. I never would have said that if I knew you better.
 JOHNNY. How well do you want to know me?
 FRANKIE. I'll let you know Monday between orders. "I got

a BLT down working!" "Tell me about your childhood."
 "Take the moo out of two!" "Were you toilet trained?"
 JOHNNY. Come here.
 FRANKIE. Are you sure you don't want something before you go?
 JOHNNY. Come here.
 FRANKIE. I've got some meatloaf in the fridge.
 JOHNNY. Come here. (*Frankie moves a few steps towards Johnny who is sitting on the edge of the bed*)
 FRANKIE. What?
 JOHNNY. Closer. (*Frankie moves closer to Johnny who pulls her all the way towards him and buries his face in her middle.*)
 FRANKIE. I can toast some bread. Butter and catsup. A cold meat loaf sandwich. All the way back to Brooklyn . . .
 JOHNNY. Heights.
 FRANKIE. Heights! This time of night. Aren't you hungry?
 JOHNNY. I'm starving.
 FRANKIE. Not
 JOHNNY. Why not?
 FRANKIE. We just did.
 JOHNNY. So?
 FRANKIE. I can't.
 JOHNNY. What do you mean, you can't?
 FRANKIE. I don't want to. (*Johnny immediately stops nuzzling Frankie. Both hands fly up with palms outwards.*) You don't have to take it like that. I'm sorry. Just not right now. You know, you're right: I do say "I'm sorry" a lot around you. There's something about you that makes me feel like I'm letting you down all the time. Like you have all these expectations of me that I can't fulfill. I'm sorry — there I go again! — but what you see here is what you get. I am someone who likes to eat after making love and right now I feel like a cold meat loaf sandwich on white toast with butter and catsup with a large glass of very cold milk and I wish you would stop looking at me like that.
 JOHNNY. Open your robe.
 FRANKIE. No. Why?
 JOHNNY. I want to look at your pussy.
 FRANKIE. No. Why?
 JOHNNY. It's beautiful.

FRANKIE. It is not. You're just saying that.
JOHNNY. I think it is. I'm telling you, you have a beautiful pussy—I!

FRANKIE. I hate that word, Johnny!

JOHNNY. —alright, thing! and I'm asking you to open your robe so I can look at it. Just look. Fifteen seconds. You can time me. Then you can make *two* cold meat loaf sandwiches and *two* big glasses of milk. Just hold the catsup on one.

FRANKIE. I don't know if you're playing games or being serious.

JOHNNY. Both. Serious games. Do you have to name everything? If I had said "You have a beautiful parakeet" you'd have let me see it and we'd be eating those sandwiches already.

FRANKIE. I had a parakeet. I hated it. I was glad when it died. (*She opens her robe.*) Okay?

JOHNNY. Oh! Yes!

FRANKIE. (*Continuing to hold her robe open as Johnny sits on edge of bed and looks.*) I'm timing this! I told my cousin I didn't want a bird. I hate birds. She swore I'd love a parakeet. What's to love? (*She almost drops the robe.*) They don't do anything except not sing when you want them to, sing when you don't and make those awful scratching noises on that awful sandpaper on the floor of their cell. I mean cage! If I ever have another pet it'll be a dog. A Golden Lab. Something that shows a little enthusiasm when you walk through the door. Something you can hold. The only time I got my hands on that goddamn parakeet was the day it dropped dead and I had to pick it up to throw it in the garbage can. Hey, come on! This has gotta be fifteen seconds. (*Frankie closes her robe. Johnny takes her hand, kisses it, rubs his cheek against it. Frankie stands awkwardly.*) You really would like a sandwich?

JOHNNY. But no catsup.

FRANKIE. Catsup's what makes a cold meat loaf sandwich good.

JOHNNY. I'm allergic. Catsup and peaches.

FRANKIE. Ugh!

JOHNNY. Well not in the same dish! (*He is still nuzzling her fingers.*)

18

FRANKIE. Can I have my hand back?

JOHNNY. Do you want it back?

FRANKIE. Well you want a sandwich, don't you?

JOHNNY. I want you to notice how we're connecting. My hand is flowing into yours. My eyes are trying to see inside yours.

FRANKIE. That's not connecting. That's holding and staring. Connecting is when the other person isn't even around and you could die from just thinking of them.

JOHNNY. That's missing. This is connecting.

FRANKIE. Yeah, well it ain't how a sandwich gets made. (*She takes her hand from Johnny and goes to kitchen area of the apartment where she takes out all the makings of her meat loaf sandwich and begins to prepare them. Johnny will just watch her from his place on the bed.*) My father used to say a good meat loaf and gravy with mashed potatoes was food fit for the gods.

JOHNNY. You're kidding! That's exactly what my old man used to say.

FRANKIE. Of course, considering our family budget we didn't have too many other options. Guess what, pop? I still don't. (*She laughs. Johnny laughs with her*) You want to turn on the television?

JOHNNY. Why?

FRANKIE. We don't have to watch it. You know, just sound. I do it all the time. Company. It beats a parakeet.

JOHNNY. I'd rather watch you.

FRANKIE. Do you ever watch the Channel 5 Movie Club on Saturday night? That's right, you got a VCR. They have this thing called the Movie Club. Talk about dumb gimmicks. You put your name and address on a postcard. If they draw it, you go on the air and tell everybody what your favorite movie is and they show it, along with intermission breaks where they tell you certain little-known facts about the movie I just as soon wouldn't have known, such as "Susan Hayward was already stricken with a fatal cancer when she made this sparkling comedy." Kind of puts a pall on things, you know?

JOHNNY. I was on that program.

FRANKIE. You were not.

19

JOHNNY. Sure I was.
 FRANKIE. What was your favorite movie?
 JOHNNY. I forget.
 FRANKIE. You probably don't even have one. *(Johnny has gotten up off the bed and come over to where Frankie is working. He finds a place to sit very close to where she stands making the sandwiches.)*
 JOHNNY. You know what I was thinking while I was looking at you over there?
 FRANKIE. I should have guessed this was coming!
 JOHNNY. I was thinking "There's got to be more to life than this" but at times like this I'll be goddamned if I know what it is.
 FRANKIE. You don't give up, do you?
 JOHNNY. I want to drown in this woman. I want to die here. So why is she talking about parakeets and meat loaf? The inequity of human relationships! I actually thought that word: "inequity." I didn't even know it was in my vocabulary. And what's that other one? Disparity! Yeah, that's it. The disparity between us at that moment. I mean, there I was, celebrating you, feasting on your loveliness, and you were talking about a fucking, pardon my French, parakeet!
 FRANKIE. Maybe it's because I was ill at ease.
 JOHNNY. Because of me?
 FRANKIE. Maybe I don't like being looked at down there that way how the hell should I know?
 JOHNNY. Bullshit! You don't like being looked at, period.
 FRANKIE. Owl
 JOHNNY. What happened?
 FRANKIE. I cut myself.
 JOHNNY. Let me see.
 FRANKIE. It's all right.
 JOHNNY. Let me see. *(He sucks the blood from her finger.)*
 FRANKIE. Look, I don't think this is going to work out. It was very nice while it lasted but like I said. . . .
 JOHNNY. You'll live. *(He releases her hand.)*
 FRANKIE. . . . I'm a BLT down sort of person and I think you're looking for someone a little more pheasant under glass. Where are you going?

JOHNNY. I'll get a bandage.
 FRANKIE. That's okay.
 JOHNNY. No problem.
 FRANKIE. Really. What are you doing? *(Johnny has gone into the bathroom. We hear him going through the medicine cabinet looking for a bandage as he continues to speak through the open door.)*
 JOHNNY. I don't remember you saying you were a BLT down sort of person.
 FRANKIE. I thought I implied it when I was talking about the meat loaf. *(Johnny comes out of the bathroom with a box of Band-Aids and a bottle of iodine.)*
 JOHNNY. It's because I said you had a beautiful pussy, isn't it? Give me your finger. *(Frankie holds out her finger while Johnny disinfects and dresses it.)*
 FRANKIE. It's because you said a lot of things. Owl
 JOHNNY. A man compliments a woman. All right, maybe he uses street talk but it's nice street talk, affectionate. It's not one of them ugly words, like the one I'm sure we're both familiar with, the one that begins with "c." I didn't say you had a beautiful "c." I was saying something loving and you took offense.
 FRANKIE. I told you I wasn't very spontaneous!
 JOHNNY. Boy, if you had said to me, "Johnny, you have the most terrific dick on you" I would be so happy. *(He finishes with the Band-Aids.)* There you go.
 FRANKIE. Thank you.
 JOHNNY. You want to see scarred fingers! *(He holds up his hands to Frankie)*
 FRANKIE. *(Winning at the sight.)* Please!
 JOHNNY. They don't hurt.
 FRANKIE. I don't want to look.
 JOHNNY. *(Looking at them.)* It's hard to connect to them. I mean, I'm not the type who should have scary hands.
 FRANKIE. You're so good with knives. I've watched you.
 JOHNNY. She admits it. The haughty waitress has cast a lustful gaze on the Knight of the Grill.
 FRANKIE. "Can that new guy chop and dice," Dena tells me. "Look at him go."

JOHNNY. Now, sure! It's a breeze. I can dice an onion blindfolded. These scars were then. On my way up the culinary ladder. I knew you were looking at me.

FRANKIE. It's human curiosity. A new face in the kitchen. Male. Look, I never said I was a nun.

JOHNNY. Hey, it's okay. It was mutual. I was looking at you.

FRANKIE. Besides, there aren't that many short order cooks who have a dictionary and a copy of Shakespeare in their locker.

JOHNNY. You'd be surprised. We're an inquiring breed. We have our own quiz show: COOKS WANT TO KNOW.

FRANKIE. The one before you, Pluto, I'm not kidding, he said his name was Pluto, I swear to God! you know what he would have done with your books? Cooked 'em!

JOHNNY. So you noticed what I was reading, too?

FRANKIE. Call me the Bionic Eye. I don't miss a trick.

JOHNNY. You know what I liked about you? The way you take the time to talk to that old guy who comes in every day about 3:30.

FRANKIE. Mr. Leon.

JOHNNY. With the cane and a copy of the Post and always has a flower in his lapel. You really are nice with him.

FRANKIE. He's really nice with me.

JOHNNY. You really talk to him. I also like the way you fluff up that thing you wear on your uniform. It looks like a big napkin.

FRANKIE. It's supposed to be a handkerchief.

JOHNNY. I like the way you're always fluffing at it.

FRANKIE. What are you? Spying on me from the kitchen?

JOHNNY. No spying. Watching.

FRANKIE. I'm going to be very self-conscious from now on.

JOHNNY. Watching and liking what I see.

FRANKIE. You in night school or something?

JOHNNY. This is my kind of night school.

FRANKIE. I meant the Shakespeare and the big words.

JOHNNY. I'm doing that on my own.

FRANKIE. Why?

JOHNNY. You don't want to be going out with a semi-illiterate, subretinous, proto-moronic asshole do you?

FRANKIE. Listen, it's easy to use words I don't know.

JOHNNY. What? Asshole? God, I like you.

FRANKIE. You still want a sandwich before you go?

JOHNNY. I still want a sandwich.

FRANKIE. Then you're going. You're not staying over.

JOHNNY. We'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

FRANKIE. There's no bridge to cross.

JOHNNY. What are you scared of?

FRANKIE. I'm not scared. *(She has resumed making sandwiches. Johnny watches her intently.)* I'm not scared. I'm . . .

JOHNNY. Yes, you are.

FRANKIE. Well not like in a horror movie. I don't think you're going to pull out a knife and stab me, if that's what you mean. Could we change the subject?

JOHNNY. What do you mean?

FRANKIE. Oh come on! You're gonna stand there and tell me you're not weird?

JOHNNY. Of course I'm weird.

FRANKIE. There's a whole other side of you I never saw at work.

JOHNNY. You thought all I did was cook?

FRANKIE. There's a whole other side of you I never saw when we were doing it either.

JOHNNY. It was probably your first experience with a passionate, imaginative lover.

FRANKIE. My first experience with an animal is more like it.

JOHNNY. Did you ever see an animal do to another animal's toes what I did to yours?

FRANKIE. Will you keep your voice down?

JOHNNY. You got this place bugged?

FRANKIE. I'm sure the whole building heard you. Oooooo Oooooo Oooooo

JOHNNY. What do you expect, the way you kept twirling your fingers around inside my ears?

FRANKIE. Nobody ever put their fingers in your ears before?

JOHNNY. Maybe for a second but not the way you did, like you were drilling for something. I thought to myself "Maybe

she gets off on putting her fingers in guys' ears." But did I say anything? Did I call you weird?

FRANKIE. You should have said something.

JOHNNY. Why?

FRANKIE. I would have stopped.

JOHNNY. Are you crazy? I loved it. I'll try anything once, especially in that department. You got any new ideas? Keep 'em coming, keep 'em coming. I'll tell you when to stop.

FRANKIE. I can just hear you now at work: "Hey, guys, that Frankie put her fingers in your ears!"

JOHNNY. That is probably just about the last thing in the entire world I would ever do about tonight: talk about it to anyone, especially those animals at work. You really don't know me.

FRANKIE. It wouldn't be the first time one of the guys had yak-yak-yaked about it.

JOHNNY. Women yak, too. Hey, no catsup!

FRANKIE. Yeah, but about dumb things.

JOHNNY. All yakking is dumb. "I slept with Frankie." "Oh yeah, well I slept with Nancy Reagan." "Big effing pardon-my-French deal, the two of yous. I slept with Mother Teresa." So it goes. This wall of disparity between us, Frankie, we gotta break it down. So the only space left between us is just us.

FRANKIE. Here's your sandwich.

JOHNNY. Here's my guts.

FRANKIE. I'm sorry. I'm not good at small talk.

JOHNNY. This isn't small talk. This is enormous talk.

FRANKIE. Whatever you call it, I'm not good at it.

JOHNNY. Sure you are. You just have to want to be.

FRANKIE. Maybe that's it. I forgot the milk.

JOHNNY. Something's going on in this room, something important. You don't feel it?

FRANKIE. I told you what I felt.

JOHNNY. You don't want to feel it. Two people coming together: sure, it's a little scary but it's pardon-my-French-again fucking wonderful, too. My heart is so full right now. Put your hand here. I swear to God, you can feel the lump. Go on, touch it.

FRANKIE. You're too needy. You want too much. I can't.

JOHNNY. That's where you're wrong. FRANKIE. You had the whole thing. There's no more where it came from. I'm empty.

JOHNNY. I know that feeling. It's terrible. The wonderful thing is, it doesn't have to last.

FRANKIE. Turn the light off! I want to show you something. (*Johnny turns off the light.*) Down one floor, over two buildings, the window with the kind of gauzey curtains. You see? (*Johnny has joined her at the window.*)

JOHNNY. Where?

FRANKIE. There!

JOHNNY. The old couple in the bathrobes? What about 'em?

FRANKIE. I've been watching them ever since I moved in. Almost eight years now. I have never seen them speak to one another, not once. He'll sit there reading the paper and she'll cook an entire meal without him looking up. They'll eat it in total silence. He'll help her wash up sometimes but they still won't say a word. After a while the lights go out and I guess they've gone to bed. (*Johnny has seen something else out the window.*)

JOHNNY. Jesus!

FRANKIE. Those two! The Raging Bull I call him. She's Mary the Masochist. They moved in about eighteen months ago.

JOHNNY. Hey!

FRANKIE. It's their thing.

JOHNNY. He's beating the shit out of her.

FRANKIE. She loves it.

JOHNNY. Nobody could love getting hit like that. We ought to do something.

FRANKIE. I saw her in the A&P. She was wearing a nurse's uniform. Living with him, that was a smart career choice. She had on sunglasses, you know, to hide the bruises. I went up to her, I figured it was now or never, and I said "I live in the building behind you. I've seen how he hits you. Is there anything I can do?" and she just looked at me and said, "I don't know what you're talking about."

JOHNNY. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

FRANKIE. Some nights when there's nothing on television I

sit here in the dark and watch them. Once I ate a whole bunch of grapes watching them. One night she ended up on the floor and didn't move till the next morning. I hate being used to them.

JOHNNY. I would never hit you. I would never hit a woman.

FRANKIE. I think you had better finish that and go.

JOHNNY. You are missing one hell of an opportunity to feel with your own hand the human heart. It's right here.

FRANKIE. Maybe next time. (*Johnny looks at her and then downs the glass of milk in one long might gulp.*) Thank you.

JOHNNY. Your meat loaf is directly from Mount Olympus. Your father was a very lucky guy.

FRANKIE. It's his recipe. He taught me.

JOHNNY. Yeah? My old man was a great cook, too.

FRANKIE. Mine didn't have much choice.

JOHNNY. How do you mean?

FRANKIE. My mother left us when I was seven.

JOHNNY. I don't believe it! My mother left us when I was seven.

FRANKIE. Oh come on!

JOHNNY. Boy, you really, really, really and truly don't know me. Just about the last thing in the entire world I would joke about is a mother who wasn't there. I don't think mothers are sacred. I just don't think they're especially funny.

FRANKIE. Me and my big mouth! I don't think you realize how serious I am about wanting you to leave now.

JOHNNY. I don't think you realize how serious I am about us.

FRANKIE. What us? There is no us.

JOHNNY. I'm working on it. Frankie and Johnny! We're already a couple.

FRANKIE. Going out with someone just because his name is Johnny and yours is Frankie is not enough of a reason.

JOHNNY. I think it's an extraordinary one. It's fate. You also said you thought I had sexy wrists.

FRANKIE. One of the biggest mistakes in my entire life!

JOHNNY. It's gotta begin somewhere. A name, a wrist, a toe.

FRANKIE. Didn't they end up killing each other?

JOHNNY. She killed him. The odds are in your favor. Besides, we're not talking about ending up. I'm just trying to continue what's been begun.

FRANKIE. If he was anything like you, no wonder she shot him.

JOHNNY. It was a crime of passion. They were the last of the red hot lovers. We're the next.

FRANKIE. You're not from Brooklyn.

JOHNNY. Brooklyn Heights.

FRANKIE. I knew you were gonna say that! You're from outer space.

JOHNNY. Allentown, Pennsylvania, actually.

FRANKIE. Very funny, very funny.

JOHNNY. You've never been to Allentown.

FRANKIE. Who told you? Viv? Martin? I know, Molly the Mouth!

JOHNNY. Now who's from outer space? What the pardon-my-French fuck are you talking about?

FRANKIE. One of them told you I was from Allentown so now you're pretending you are so you can continue with this coincidence theory.

JOHNNY. You're from Allentown? I was born in Allentown.

FRANKIE. Very funny. Very funny.

JOHNNY. St. Stephen's Hospital. We lived on Martell St. FRANKIE. I suppose you went to Moody High School, too.

JOHNNY. No, we moved when I was eight. I started out at Park Lane Elementary though. Did you go to Park Lane? This is incredible! This is better than anything in Shirley MacLaine.

FRANKIE. It's a small world and Allentown's a big city.

JOHNNY. Not that small and not that big.

FRANKIE. I still don't believe you.

JOHNNY. Of course you don't. It's one big pardon-my-French again fucking miracle and you don't believe in them.

FRANKIE. I'll tell you one thing: I could never, not in a million years, be seriously involved with a man who said "Pardon my French" all the time.

JOHNNY. Done. Finished. You got it.

FRANKIE. I mean, where do you pick up an expression like that?

JOHNNY. Out of respect for a person. A woman in this case. FRANKIE. The first time you said it tonight I practically told you I had a headache and had to go home.

JOHNNY. That's so scary to me! That three little words, "Pardon my French," could separate two people from saying the three little words that make them connect!

FRANKIE. What three little words?

JOHNNY. I love you.

FRANKIE. Oh. Them. I should've guessed.

JOHNNY. Did you ever say them to anyone?

FRANKIE. Say them or mean them? My father, my first true love and a couple of thousand men since. That's about it. JOHNNY. I'm not counting.

FRANKIE. You're really from Allentown? (*Johnny nods, takes a bite out of his sandwich and makes a "Cross My Heart" sign over his chest. Then he pushes his empty milk glass towards Frankie meaning he would like a refill, which she will get.*) How did you get so lucky to get out of there at eight?

JOHNNY. (*Talking and eating.*) My mother. She ran off with somebody she'd met at an A.A. meeting. My father took us to Baltimore. He had a sister. She couldn't cope with us. We ended up in foster homes. Could I have a little salt? I bounced all over the place. Washington, D.C. was the best. You go through that Smithsonian Institute they got there and there ain't nothing they're gonna teach you in college! That place is a gold mine. Portland, Maine, is nice, too. Cold though. FRANKIE. You didn't miss much not staying in Allentown. . . . My big highlight was. . . .

JOHNNY. What?

FRANKIE. Nothing. It's stupid.

JOHNNY. I've told you stupid things.

FRANKIE. Not this stupid.

JOHNNY. No fair.

FRANKIE. All right I played Fiona in our high school production of *Brigadoon*.

JOHNNY. What's stupid about that? I bet you were wonderful.

FRANKIE. It's hardly like winning a scholarship to Harvard

or being the class valedictorian. It's an event; it shouldn't be a highlight.

JOHNNY. So you're an actress!

FRANKIE. You mean at this very moment in time?

JOHNNY. I said to myself "She's not just a waitress."

FRANKIE. Yeah, she's an unsuccessful actress! What are you really?

JOHNNY. I'm really a cook.

FRANKIE. Oh. When you put it like that, I'm really a waitress. I haven't tried to get an acting job since the day I decided I never was gonna get one. Somebody told me you gotta have balls to be a great actress. I got balls, I told 'em. No, Frankie you got a big mouth!

JOHNNY. Would you . . . ? You know . . . ?

FRANKIE. What?

JOHNNY. Act something for me.

FRANKIE. What are you? Nuts? You think actors go around acting for people just like that? Like we do requests?

JOHNNY. I'm sorry. I didn't know.

FRANKIE. Acting is an art. It's a responsibility. It's a privilege.

JOHNNY. And I bet you're good at it.

FRANKIE. And it looks like I'll die with my secret. Anyway, what happened to your mother?

JOHNNY. I tracked her down when I was eighteen. They were still together, living in Philadelphia and both drinking again. They say Philadelphia will do that to you.

FRANKIE. So you saw her again? You see, I never did.

JOHNNY. But how this potbellied, balding, gin-breathed stranger could have been the object of anyone's desire but especially my mother's! She was still so beautiful, even through the booze, but he was one hundred percent turkey. FRANKIE. Mine was killed in a car wreck about three, no, four years ago. She was with her turkey. He go it, too. I didn't hear about it for almost a month.

JOHNNY. What people see in one another! It's a total mystery. Shakespeare said it best: "There are more things in heaven and on earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio." Something like that. I'm pretty close. Did you ever read *Hamlet*?

FRANKIE. Probably.
JOHNNY. I like him. I've only read a couple of his things. They're not easy. Lots of old words. Archaic, you know? Then all of a sudden he puts it all together and comes up with something clear and simple and it's real nice and you feel you've learned something. This Horatio was Hamlet's best friend. He thought he had it all figured out, so Hamlet set him straight. Do you have a best friend?
FRANKIE. Not really.

JOHNNY. That's okay. I'll be your best friend.
FRANKIE. You think a lot of yourself, don't you?
JOHNNY. Look, I'm going all over the place with you. I might as well come right out with it: I love you. I'm in love with you. I personally think we should get married and I definitely want us to have kids, three or four. There! That wasn't so difficult. You don't have to say anything. I just wanted to get it out on the table. Talk about a load off!
FRANKIE. Talk about a load off? Talk about a crock of shit.
JOHNNY. Hey, come on, don't. One of the things I like about you, Frankie, is that you talk nice. Don't start that stuff now.

FRANKIE. Well fuck you how I talk! I'll talk any fucking way I fucking feel like it! It's my fucking apartment in the fucking first place and who the fuck are you to come in here and start telling me I talk nice. (*She has started to cry.*)
JOHNNY. I'm sorry.

FRANKIE. Out of the blue, just like that, you've decided we're going to get involved?

JOHNNY. If you want to understate it like that.

FRANKIE. Whatever happened to a second date?

JOHNNY. We were beyond that two hours ago.

FRANKIE. Maybe you were.

JOHNNY. I like your apartment. That's a nice robe. You're a very pretty woman but I guess all the guys tell you that. Is that what you want?

FRANKIE. I don't want this.

JOHNNY. That has occurred to me. Dumb, I am not. Nervy and persistent, those I plead guilty to. I'm also something else people aren't too accustomed to these days: courageous. I want you and I'm coming after you.

FRANKIE. Has it occurred to you that maybe I don't want you?

JOHNNY. Only a couple of hundred times. I got my work cut out for me.

FRANKIE. Just because you take me out to dinner —!

JOHNNY. That wasn't my fault!

FRANKIE. Then the movies —!

JOHNNY. It got four stars!

FRANKIE. And end up making love —!

JOHNNY. Great love.

FRANKIE. Okay love.

JOHNNY. Great love. The dinner and the movie were lousy. We were dynamite.

FRANKIE. Okay, good love. So why do you have to go spoil everything?

JOHNNY. I told you I loved you. That makes me unlovable?

FRANKIE. It makes you a creep!

JOHNNY. Oh.

FRANKIE. No, I take that back. You're not a creep. You're sincere. That's what's so awful. Well, I'm sincere, too. I sincerely do not want to continue this.

JOHNNY. Pretend that we're the only two people in the entire world, that's what I'm doing, and it all falls into place.

FRANKIE. And I was looking forward to seeing you again.

JOHNNY. I'm right here.

FRANKIE. "God," I was thinking, "make him want to see me again without him knowing that's what I want."

JOHNNY. I already did know. God had nothing to do with it.

FRANKIE. I said "see you again," not the stuff you're talking about. Kids for Christ's sake!

JOHNNY. What's wrong with kids?

FRANKIE. I hate kids.

JOHNNY. I don't believe that.

FRANKIE. I'm too old to have kids.

JOHNNY. No, you're not.

FRANKIE. I can't have any. Now are you happy?

JOHNNY. We'll adopt.

FRANKIE. You just don't decide to fall in love with people out of the blue.

JOHNNY. Why not?
 FRANKIE. They don't like it. How would you like it if Helen came up to you and said, "I'm in love with you. I want to have your baby."
 JOHNNY. Who's Helen?
 FRANKIE. At work.
 JOHNNY. That Helen?
 FRANKIE. You'd run like hell.
 JOHNNY. She's close to seventy.
 FRANKIE. I thought love was blind.
 JOHNNY. It's the exact opposite. Besides, I'd tell her I was in love with you.
 FRANKIE. You don't know me.
 JOHNNY. Is that what all this is about? Of course I don't know you. You don't know me either. We got off to a great start. Why do you want to stop?
 FRANKIE. Does it have to be tonight?
 JOHNNY. Yes!
 FRANKIE. Who says?
 JOHNNY. We may not make it to tomorrow. I might get knifed if you make me go home. You might choke on a chicken bone. Unknown poison gasses could kill us both in our sleep. When it comes to love, life's cheap and it's short. So don't fuck with it and don't pardon my French.
 FRANKIE. This is worse than *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*.
 JOHNNY. Look, Frankie, I might see someone on the BMT tonight, get lucky and get laid, and think I was in love with her. This is the only chance we have to really come together. I'm convinced of it. People are given one moment to connect. Not two, not three, one! They don't take it, it's gone forever and they end up not only pardon-my-French-for-the-very-last-time screwing that person on the BMT but marrying her.
 FRANKIE. Boy, are you barking up the wrong tree.
 JOHNNY. I never thought I could be in love with a woman who said "barking up the wrong tree."
 FRANKIE. You've driven me to it. I never used that expression in my entire life.
 JOHNNY. You sure you don't want to feel this lump?

FRANKIE. Why won't you go?
 JOHNNY. The only difference between us right now is I know how this is going to end — happily — and you don't. I need a best friend, too. Could I trouble you for another glass of milk?
 FRANKIE. Okay, milk, but then I really want you to go. Promise?
 JOHNNY. You drive a hard bargain. Milk for exile from the Magic Kingdom.
 FRANKIE. Promise?
 JOHNNY. Promise.
 FRANKIE. Say it like you mean it.
 JOHNNY. I promise.
 FRANKIE. It's a good thing you're not an actor.
 JOHNNY. All right, I don't promise.
 FRANKIE. Now I believe you. (*She goes to refrigerator and pours a glass of milk.*)
 JOHNNY. It's just words. It's all words. Words, words, words. He said that, too, I think. I read somewhere Shakespeare said just about everything. I'll tell you one thing he didn't say: I love you, Frankie. (*Frankie brings him a glass of milk.*)
 FRANKIE. Drink your milk.
 JOHNNY. I bet that's something else he never said: "Drink your milk." *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Act III, scene ii. I don't think so. The Swan of Avon ain't got nothing on us.
 FRANKIE. Did anybody ever tell you you talk too much?
 JOHNNY. Yeah, I told you about half an hour ago. There's no virtue in being a mute.
 FRANKIE. I'm not a mute.
 JOHNNY. Did I say you were?
 FRANKIE. I talk when I have something to say.
 JOHNNY. Did I say she was a mute?
 FRANKIE. You know, not everybody thinks life is a picnic. Some of us have problems. Some of us have sorrows. But people like you are so busy telling us what you want, how you feel you don't even notice the rest of us who aren't exactly jumping up and down for joy.
 JOHNNY. I haven't done anything but notice you.

FRANKIE. Shut up!

JOHNNY. Who's jumping up and down!

FRANKIE. I said, shut up! Just drink your milk and go. I don't want to hear your voice again tonight.

JOHNNY. What do you want?

FRANKIE. I want to be alone. I want to watch television. I want to eat ice cream. I want to sleep. I want to stop worrying I'm trapped in my own apartment with a fucking maniac.

JOHNNY. We all have problems, you know.

FRANKIE. Right now, mine begin and end with you. You said you'd go.

JOHNNY. I lied.

FRANKIE. All I have to do is open that window and start screaming.

JOHNNY. In this city? Lots of luck.

FRANKIE. I have neighbors upstairs, friends . . .

JOHNNY. No one's gonna want to get involved in us. They'll just tell you to call the police.

FRANKIE. Don't think it hasn't crossed my mind.

JOHNNY. They'll come, give or take an hour or two. They'll make me leave but I'll be right back. That's a very handy fire escape. If not tonight, then tomorrow or the day after that. Sooner or later, you're gonna have to deal with me. Why don't we just get it over with? Besides, tomorrow's Sunday. We can sleep in. *(At some point before this, the music on the radio has changed to Scriabin's Second Symphony. * Neither Frankie nor Johnny heard the announcement. Ideally, the audience didn't either.)*

FRANKIE. I am trapped in my own apartment with a fucking maniac!

JOHNNY. You don't mean that. I'm trying to improve my life and I'm running out of time. I'm still going around in circles with you. There's gotta be that one thing I say that makes you listen. That makes us connect. What station are you on?

FRANKIE. What?

JOHNNY. It looks like it's around about ninety. You got a paper? *(He starts rummaging about for a newspaper.)*

*See Special Note on copyright page.

FRANKIE. What do you think you're doing?

JOHNNY. I want to get the name of that piece of music you liked for you.

FRANKIE. I don't care anymore.

JOHNNY. Well, I do. When you come across something beautiful, you gotta go for it. It doesn't grow on trees, beautiful things. *(Johnny has found the radio station call letters in the newspaper.)* WKCC. *(As he dials information.)* I owe you a quarter.

FRANKIE. He's nuts. Out and out local

JOHNNY. *(Into phone.)* Give me the number for WKCC. Thank you. *(To Frankie.)* Without the name, we'll lose that music and I'll never find it on my own. You let something like that slip through your fingers and you deserve rock and roll! *(He hangs up and immediately redials.)* I hate these recordings that give you the number now. One less human contact. *(To Frankie.)* Where are you going?

FRANKIE. Out and you better not be here when I get back.

JOHNNY. You want to pick up some Haagen-Dazs Vanilla Swiss Almond while you're out?

FRANKIE. I said get out! *(She starts throwing things.)* You're a maniac! You're a creep! You're a . . . Oh!

JOHNNY. *(Into phone.)* May I speak to your disc jockey? . . . Well excuse me! *(He covers phone, to Frankie.)* They don't have a disc jockey. They have someone called Midnight With Marlon. *(Into phone.)* Hello, Marlon? My name is Johnny. My friend and I were making love and in the afterglow, which I sometimes think is the most beautiful part of making love, she noticed that you were playing some really beautiful music, piano. She was right. I don't know much about quality music, which I could gather that was, so I would like to know the name of that particular piece and the artist performing it so I can buy the record and present it to my lady love, whose name is Frankie and is that a beautiful coincidence or is it not? *(Short pause.)* Bach. Johann Sebastian, right? I heard of him. The Goldberg Variations. Glenn Gould. Columbia Records. * *(To Frankie.)* You gonna re-

*See Special Note on copyright page.

member this? (*Frankie smacks him hard across the cheek. Johnny takes the phone from his ear and holds it against his chest. He just looks at her. She smacks him again. This time he catches her hand while it is still against his cheek, holds it a beat, then brings it to his lips and kisses it. Then, into phone, he continues but what he says is really for Frankie, his eyes never leaving her.*) Do you take requests, Marlon? Then make an exception! There's a man and a woman. Not young, not old. No great beauties, either one. They meet where they work: a restaurant and it's not the Ritz. She's a waitress. He's a cook. They meet but they don't connect. "I got two medium burgers working" and "Pick up, side of fries" is pretty much the extent of it. But she's noticed him, he can feel it. And he's noticed her. Right off. They both knew tonight was going to happen. So why did it take him six weeks for him to ask her if she wanted to see a movie that neither one of them could tell you the name of right now? Why did they eat ice cream sundaes before she asked him if he wanted to come up since they were in the neighborhood? And then they were making love and for maybe an hour they forgot the ten million things that made them think "I don't love this person. I don't even like them" and instead all they knew was that they were together and it was perfect and they were perfect and that's all there was to know about it and as they lay there, they both began the million reasons not to love one another like a familiar rosary. Only this time he stopped himself. Maybe it was the music you were playing. They both heard it. Only now they're both beginning to forget they did. So would you play something for Frankie and Johnny on the eve of something that ought to last, not self-destruct. I guess I want you to play the most beautiful music ever written and dedicate it to us. (*He hangs up.*) Don't go.

FRANKIE. Why are you doing this?

JOHNNY. I'm tired of looking. Everything I want is in this room. (*He kisses her. Frankie responds. It quickly gets passionate. Frankie starts to undress.*)

JOHNNY. Let me.

FRANKIE. Huh?

JOHNNY. Let me do it. (*He helps her out of her raincoat. Then he takes it and hangs it up. Frankie stands a little awkwardly in*

the center of the room waiting for him to come back to her.) Make yourself at home. That was a little joke. No, that was a little bad joke. (*He turns off a lamp.*)

FRANKIE. What's the matter?

JOHNNY. Nothing.

FRANKIE. Leave the lights on.

JOHNNY. It's better off.

FRANKIE. I want to see you this time. (*Johnny has started unbuttoning her blouse.*)

JOHNNY. I don't like to make love with the lights on.

FRANKIE. Why not?

JOHNNY. I can't.

FRANKIE. That's a good reason. (*Johnny is having a little difficulty undressing her.*)

JOHNNY. It's because of Archie.

FRANKIE. Okay, I'll bite. Who's Archie?

JOHNNY. A huge Great Dane at one of my foster families. I mean, massive. Whenever I'd jack off, he'd just stare at me.

At it. Talk about serious castration anxiety! So I got in the habit of doing it with the lights off.

FRANKIE. Sometimes I am so glad I'm a girl.

JOHNNY. I'm also a romantic. I think everything looks better in half-light and shadows.

FRANKIE. That's not romance, that's hiding something. Romance is seeing somebody for what they really are and still wanting them warts and all.

JOHNNY. I got plenty of them. (*He stops undressing her.*) I'm forty-five.

FRANKIE. You look younger. I'm thirty-seven.

JOHNNY. So do you. I'm forty-six.

FRANKIE. Honest?

JOHNNY. I'll be forty-eight the tenth of next month.

FRANKIE. What do you want for your birthday?

JOHNNY. To be able to stop bullshitting about things like my age.

FRANKIE. I'll be thirty-nine on the eleventh.

JOHNNY. We're both what-do-you-ma-call-it!

FRANKIE. Figures! Gimme a hand with the bed. I hate it when the sheets get like that. (*Frankie starts straightening up the bed. Johnny turns off another light in the room before helping*

ner to smooth the sheets and blankets.) I'm the one who ought to be hiding from the light. Me and my goddamn inverted nipples. I hate the way they look.

JOHNNY. Don't be silly.

FRANKIE. Yeah? You be a woman and have someone invert your nipples and see how you like it.

JOHNNY. I love your nipples.

FRANKIE. Well I hate 'em.

JOHNNY. What do you know? (They stand on opposite sides of the bed shaking out the sheets.) Listen, I wish I was circumcised.

FRANKIE. Sounds like you had your chance and blew it.

JOHNNY. Hunh?

FRANKIE. The dog. Skip it, skip it! I'll be forty-one on the eleventh.

JOHNNY. Big deal. So what do you want?

FRANKIE. The same thing you do and a new pair of tits.

JOHNNY. Hey, it means a lot to me you talk nice. (Johnny crosses to window to close the shade. Frankie goes to bed and lies down on it.) Jesus. (He points to something outside the window and above it.)

FRANKIE. Come away from there. It's not good for you.

JOHNNY. Come here. Quick. (He stands at the window. Moonlight covers his body.)

FRANKIE. I mean it. I've looked too long.

JOHNNY. There's a full moon! You can just see it between the buildings. Will you look at that! Now that's what I call beautiful

FRANKIE. I ordered it just for you. Macy's. Twenty-five bucks an hour.

JOHNNY. Look at it!

FRANKIE. Later.

JOHNNY. It won't be there later. (Frankie joins him at the window.) You can almost see it move.

FRANKIE. (Lowering her gaze.) All quiet on the Western front. For now. Come on. (She moves to bed.) Come on. I want you to make love to me. (Johnny turns from the window)

JOHNNY. I want to make love to you.

FRANKIE. Woof! Woof! (Nothing.) It was a joke, I'm sorry.

RADIO ANNOUNCER. This young man was very persuasive . . .

JOHNNY. Ssshh! Listen! (He moves quickly to the bedside table and turns up the volume.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER. So although it's against my policy to play requests, there's an exception to every rule. I don't know if this is the most beautiful music ever written, Frankie and Johnny—and how I wish that really were your names but I know when my leg is being pulled—but whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever you're doing, I hope this is something like what you had in mind. (Debussy's "Clair de Lune" is heard. * Johnny switches off the bedside lamp and kisses Frankie. Then he gets up quickly and goes to window and reaches for the shade. He sees the two couples in the apartments across the courtyard. He looks up to the moon. There is moonlight spilling onto his face and body. He decides not to pull the shade, allowing the moonlight to spill into the room. He moves away from the window and disappears in the shadows of the bed. We hear a distant siren. We hear the Debussy. We hear the sounds of Frankie and Johnny starting to make love. Fifteen seconds of this. Abrupt silence. Total blackout.)

END OF ACT ONE

* See Special Note on copyright page.

ACT TWO

*AT RISE: The only illumination in the room comes from the television set. In its grey light, we can see Frankie and Johnny in the bed, under the covers. They both stare at it. The only sound is coming from the radio: now it is playing "The Ride of the Valkyries." Thirty seconds of the Wagner.**

JOHNNY. Is that Charles Bronson? (Johnny turns down radio.) Is that Charles Bronson?
FRANKIE. Or the other one. I always get people in those kinds of movies confused.
JOHNNY. James Coburn?
FRANKIE. I think that's his name.
JOHNNY. Whoever he is, I hate him. It's not Clint Eastwood?
FRANKIE. No. I know what Clint Eastwood looks like. Look, you don't have to make such a big deal about it.
JOHNNY. I'm not making a big deal about it.
FRANKIE. Then how come we stopped?
JOHNNY. I haven't stopped. We're taking a little break. Will you look at that! I am appalled at the violence in the world today.
FRANKIE. It's okay if we don't.
JOHNNY. I know.
FRANKIE. Really.
JOHNNY. I said I know. Jesus, he drove a fucking nail through his head!
FRANKIE. I had my eyes shut.
JOHNNY. And when did that asshole go from playing our song to those screaming meemies? I thought he liked us. That kind of music is bad enough during normal hours. But when you're trying to make love to someone . . . I Talk

*See Special Note on copyright page.

about not knowing how to segue from one mood to the next! I ought to call that station and complain. (We hear him trip over something.) Goddamnit! (Frankie turns on the bedside lamp.)

FRANKIE. Are you all right?

JOHNNY. I wish you wouldn't leave—. Yeah. Since I'm up, you want something?

FRANKIE. Johnny.

JOHNNY. You're the one who's making a big deal about it. I'm fine. I'm not upset. Look, I'm dancing. Now yes or no? What do you want?

FRANKIE. A Western on white down and a glass of milk. JOHNNY. Very funny. What do want? A beer? (We can see him in the light of the open refrigerator as he searches it for food and drink.)

FRANKIE. I want a Western and a glass of milk.

JOHNNY. We're in the middle of something. This is a little rest, not a major food break. Besides, you just ate.

FRANKIE. I'm still hungry.

JOHNNY. I'm opening you a beer.

FRANKIE. I want a Western and a glass of milk.

JOHNNY. I never know when you're kidding me or not. I think that's one of the things I like about you but I'm not sure.

FRANKIE. I'm not kidding you. I'm starving and what I would like is one of your Westerns and a glass of milk. Everyone says you make a great Western.

JOHNNY. They do?

FRANKIE. So come on, Johnny, Johnny. . . . ravish me with your cooking.

JOHNNY. You mean, since I couldn't ravish you with my body?

FRANKIE. No, that's not what I mean.

JOHNNY. Look, this is a temporary hiatus. I would like to keep it that way.

FRANKIE. So would I. I'll eat fast.

JOHNNY. All I'm saying is that if we get into real food now and I start cooking you a Western and chopping onions and peppers, it's going to be very hard to get back into the mood for what we were doing and which, contrary to your impres-

perhaps, I was enjoying enormously. All I asked for was a little breather for Christ's sake!

FRANKIE. I only asked for a sandwich.

JOHNNY. You asked for a Western. Westerns mean chopping and dicing and sautéing and . . . you know what goes into a Western! Come on, Frankie, it's not like you asked for a peanut butter and jelly on a Ritz cracker. You want food.

FRANKIE. I suppose I could call out.

JOHNNY. All right, all right! (*He starts getting ingredients out of the refrigerator and slamming onto work counter.*) I just wish somebody would tell me how we got from a mini-sex problem to a major pig out.

FRANKIE. I don't think there's a connection.

JOHNNY. I wasn't going to tell you this but since you're not sparing my feelings, I'm not going to go on sparing yours: this is the first time anything like this ever happened to me.

FRANKIE. So?

JOHNNY. Well if you can't make the connection . . . I

FRANKIE. Between what and what?

JOHNNY. It takes two to tango.

FRANKIE. You mean it's my fault you conked out?

JOHNNY. I didn't say it was anybody's fault. And I didn't conk out. I'm resting.

FRANKIE. Oh, the old And-On-The-Seventh-Day Syndrome!

JOHNNY. There's no need to be sarcastic.

FRANKIE. Then don't blame me your dancing dog didn't dance when you told it to. That sounds terrible. Don't blame me for your limp dick. Now what about my Western?

JOHNNY. You expect me to make you a sandwich after that?

FRANKIE. After what?

JOHNNY. Insulting my manhood.

FRANKIE. I didn't insult your manhood. I merely described a phase it was going through. Everything has phases. To talk about the new moon doesn't insult the old one. You have a lovely manhood. It's just in eclipse right now so you can make me one of your terrific Westerns.

JOHNNY. This is the first time this has ever happened to me. I swear to God.

FRANKIE. I believe you.

JOHNNY. I hate it. I hate it a lot.

FRANKIE. Just be glad you have someone as sympathetic as me to share it with.

JOHNNY. Don't make fun.

FRANKIE. I'm not. (*She goes to him and comforts him.*) It's okay.

JOHNNY. You're lucky women don't have problems like this.

FRANKIE. We've got enough of our own in that department.

JOHNNY. It's male menopause. I've been dreading this.

FRANKIE. You know what I think it was? The moonlight. You were standing in it. It was bathing your body. I've always been very suspicious of what moonlight does to people.

JOHNNY. It's supposed to make them romantic.

FRANKIE. Or turn you into a werewolf. That's what I was raised on. My grandmother was always coming into my bedroom to make sure the blinds were down. She was convinced sleeping in the moonlight would turn you into the wolfman. I thought if I slept in the moonlight I'd wake up a beautiful fairy princess, so I kept falling asleep with the blinds open and she kept coming in and closing them. She always denied it was her. "Wasn't me, precious. Must have been your Guardian Angel." Remember them?

JOHNNY. What do you mean, "remember"?

FRANKIE. One night I decided to stay awake and catch her in the act. It seemed like forever. When you're that age, you don't have anything to stay awake about. So you're failing geography, so what? Finally my grandmother came into the room. She had to lean across my bed to close the blinds. Her bosom was so close to my face. She smelled so nice. I pretended I was still sleeping and took the deepest breath of her I could. In that one moment, I think I knew what it was like to be loved. Really loved. I was so safe, so protected! That's better than being pretty. I'll never forget it. The next thing I knew it was morning and I still didn't look like Audrey Hep-

burn. Now when I lie in bed with the blinds up and the moonlight spilling in, I'm not thinking I want to be somebody else, I just want my Nana back.

JOHNNY. Nana? You called your grandmother Nana? That's what I called mine.

FRANKIE. It's not that unusual.

JOHNNY. It's incredible! I don't know anybody else who called their grandmother Nana. I always thought it was very unusual of me and more than anything else I wanted to be like everyone else.

FRANKIE. You, like everyone else?

JOHNNY. It was a disaster. "Why do we call her Nana?" I used to ask my mother—this was before Philadelphia—"Everyone else says grandma." "We just do," she told me. My mother was not one for great answers. Sort of a Sphinx in that department. Anyway, I for one am very glad you didn't wake up Audrey Hepburn. She's too thin. People should have meat on their bones. "Beware yon Cassius. He hath a lean and hungry look."

FRANKIE. Who's Cassius?

JOHNNY. I don't know. But obviously he was thin and Shakespeare thinks we should be wary of skinny people.

FRANKIE. Why?

JOHNNY. Well you know how they are. Grim. Kind of waiting and watching you all the time.

FRANKIE. Like Connie?

JOHNNY. Who?

FRANKIE. Connie Cantwell. She works weekends. Red hair, wears a hairnet?

JOHNNY. Exactly! Wouldn't you beware her?

FRANKIE. I've actually seen her steal tips.

JOHNNY. There you go! He's filled with little tips like that. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be."

FRANKIE. That's just common sense. You don't have to be a genius to figure that one out.

JOHNNY. Of course not. But he put it in poetry so that people would know up here what they already knew in here and so they would remember it. "To be or not to be."

FRANKIE. Everyone knows that. Do I want to kill myself? JOHNNY. Well?

FRANKIE. Well what?

JOHNNY. Do you want to kill yourself?

FRANKIE. Of course not. Well not right now. Everybody wants to kill themselves some of the time.

JOHNNY. They shouldn't.

FRANKIE. Well they do! That doesn't mean they're gonna do it. Could we get off this?

JOHNNY. The list just gets longer and longer.

FRANKIE. What list?

JOHNNY. The us list, things we got in common.

FRANKIE. What do you want to kill yourself about some times?

JOHNNY. Right now? My limp dick. I'm kidding, I'm kidding. I'm going to start warning you before I say something funny.

FRANKIE. You don't have to warn me. Just say something funny.

JOHNNY. I want to kill myself sometimes when I think I'm the only person in the world and the part of me that feels that way is trapped inside this body that only bumps into other bodies without ever connecting with the only other person in the world trapped inside of them. We gotta connect. We just have to. Or we die.

FRANKIE. We're connecting.

JOHNNY. Are we?

FRANKIE. I am. I feel very . . .

JOHNNY. Say it.

FRANKIE. I don't know what it is.

JOHNNY. Say it anyway.

FRANKIE. Protective, but that's crazy!

JOHNNY. It's nice.

FRANKIE. I'm looking for somebody to take care of me this time.

JOHNNY. We all are.

FRANKIE. Why do we keep going from one subject I don't like to another?

JOHNNY. We're like an FM station when you're out driving in a car. We keep drifting and we gotta tune ourselves back in.

FRANKIE. Who says?

JOHNNY. Hey, I'm being nice.
 FRANKIE. May I say something without you biting my head off?
 JOHNNY. Aw, c'mon!
 FRANKIE. I mean it!
 JOHNNY. You are the woman I've been looking for all my adult life. You can say anything you want. Speak, queen of my heart, speak!
 FRANKIE. That's just what I was talking about.
 JOHNNY. What? Queen of my heart?
 FRANKIE. I'm not the queen of anybody's heart.
 JOHNNY. Fine. So what is it?
 FRANKIE. This is going to sound awfully small potatoes now.
 JOHNNY. You couldn't speak in small potatoes if you wanted to.
 FRANKIE. I still want a Western.
 JOHNNY. You don't give up. You're like a rat terrier with a bone.
 FRANKIE. I'm sorry.
 JOHNNY. I didn't hear that.
 FRANKIE. All right, I'm not sorry. I'm a very simple person. I get hungry and I want to eat.
 JOHNNY. I'm also a very simple person.
 FRANKIE. Sure you are!
 JOHNNY. I see something I want, I don't take no. I used to but not anymore.
 FRANKIE. What is that supposed to mean?
 JOHNNY. My life was happening to me. Now I'm making it happen. Same as with you and this sandwich. You wanted it, went for it and won. (*He turns and opens the refrigerator.*) You can tell a lot about someone from what they keep in their icebox. That and their medicine chest. I would've made a terrific detective.
 FRANKIE. Just stay out of my medicine chest. And I didn't appreciate you going through my purse either.
 JOHNNY. Someone is clearly not prepared for the eruption into her what-she-thinks-is-humdrum life of an extraordinary man, chef and fellow worker. Why don't you try our friend on the radio again? (*Frankie will go to radio and turn it*

on.) Personally, I think it was all his fault. When it comes to music, I'm a mellow sort of guy. That last thing he played was for people playing with themselves, not one another. "If music be the food of love, play on." You-Know-Who.
 FRANKIE. (*At the radio.*) I would love a cigarette.
 JOHNNY. Over my dead body.
 FRANKIE. That doesn't mean I'm going to smoke one. (*She turns up volume. We hear the Cesar Franck Sonata for Piano and Violin.*) * How's that?
 JOHNNY. Commeçi, commeça.
 FRANKIE. It's pretty.
 JOHNNY. Let's put it this way: he's no Bach. The first thing in the morning I'm going to buy you those Goldberg Variations.
 FRANKIE. It's Sunday. Everything'll be closed.
 JOHNNY. Monday then.
 FRANKIE. I guess Bach was Jewish. The Goldberg Variations.
 JOHNNY. I read somewhere a lot of great composers were.
 FRANKIE. I thought you were Jewish.
 JOHNNY. In New York, that's a good assumption.
 FRANKIE. I just realized I don't know your last name.
 JOHNNY. I don't know yours.
 FRANKIE. Mine's right on the bell. It's all over this place.
 JOHNNY. We don't need last names. We're Frankie and Johnny. (*Closing the refrigerator door.*) Boy, you just shot my icebox theory all to hell. You should be an Irish longshoreman from what you've got in there.
 FRANKIE. I am. Had you fooled for a while there, didn't I? (*Johnny is getting ready to make the Western.*)
 JOHNNY. Now watch how I do this. After this, you're on your own! (*Johnny begins to work with the food and the utensils. He works swiftly, precisely and with great élan. He is a virtuoso in the kitchen. Frankie will pull up a stool and watch him work.*)
 FRANKIE. I know I'm going to regret saying this but I thought I was the only person I knew who referred to one of those things as an icebox.

*See Special Note on copyright page.

JC NY. Now who's pulling whose leg?
FRANKIE. And I don't say things like phonograph or record player. Just "icebox" and I only dimly remember us having one when I was about that big.

JOHNNY. Do you know what the population of New York City is?

FRANKIE. Eight million?

JOHNNY. Nine million, six hundred eighty-four thousand, four hundred eleven. Exactly two of them refer to those things as iceboxes. Those two, after you-know-what-ing their brains out, are now engaged in making a Western sandwich somewhere in Hell's Kitchen.

FRANKIE. It's Clinton actually.

JOHNNY. You still gonna call that a coincidence? Boy, I bet the Swan of Avon would have had something to say about that!

FRANKIE. I believe there's a reason for everything and I like to know what it is. One and one are two.

JOHNNY. That's mathematics. We're talking people.

FRANKIE. One and one should be two with them, too. Too many people throw you a curve nowadays and you end up with a three.

JOHNNY. Do I hear the voice of bitter experience?

FRANKIE. I wasn't born yesterday, if that's what you're talking about. (*She has watched Johnny intently during this as he has continued to prepare the Western.*) That's something I've never seen anyone do.

JOHNNY. What?

FRANKIE. Chop the pepper that fine.

JOHNNY. 'Cause they're looking for short-cuts.

FRANKIE. You're incredible with that knife.

JOHNNY. Thank you.

FRANKIE. And don't say it's all in the wrists.

JOHNNY. It is.

FRANKIE. I hate that expression. It's such a "fuck you." What people really mean is "I know how to do it and you don't. Ha ha ha!"

JOHNNY. What brought that on? We're talking nice and Bingol the armor goes up.

FRANKIE. What about your armor?

JOHNNY. I don't have any.
FRANKIE. Everybody has armor. They'd be dead if they didn't.

JOHNNY. Bloody but unbowed.

FRANKIE. Besides, I wasn't talking about you.

JOHNNY. Where's your cayenne?

FRANKIE. I don't have any. I don't even know what it is. What's that you just put in?

JOHNNY. Wouldn't you like to know? (*He does a good imitation of Frankie.*) "Ha ha ha!"

FRANKIE. C'm'on!

JOHNNY. Salt, just salt!

FRANKIE. Is that all?

JOHNNY. Cooking's no big deal.

FRANKIE. It is if you can't.

JOHNNY. You just never had anyone to cook for. The way I feel about you I feel a Duck a l'Orange Flambé with a puree of water chestnuts coming on!

FRANKIE. I like food. I just never saw the joy in cooking it. My mother hated cooking. Her primary utensil was a can opener. I even think she resented serving us on plates. She used to eat right out the pots and pans. "One less thing to clean. Who's to know? We ain't got company."

JOHNNY. This isn't the right kind of bread.

FRANKIE. Gee, I'll run right out!

JOHNNY. There you go again! You want a good Western down, you need the right bread.

FRANKIE. Did you always want to be a cook?

JOHNNY. About as much as you wanted to be a waitress.

FRANKIE. That bad, huh?

JOHNNY. When I look at some of the choices I made with my life, it seems almost inevitable I would end up slinging hash.

FRANKIE. Same with me and waitressing. I was supposed to graduate high school and work for a second cousin who had a dental laboratory.

JOHNNY. That place down by the old train station?

FRANKIE. Yeah, that's the one.

JOHNNY. His son was in my class. Arnold, right?

FRANKIE. You knew my cousin Arnold?

JOE. Y. Enough to say hello. Finish your story.
 FRANKIE. Anyway, they made bridges, plates, retainers, stuff like that there. A dentist would take a parafin impression of the patient's mouth and make plaster of paris molds for the technicians to work from.
 JOHNNY. No wonder the acting bug bit.
 FRANKIE. I never had what it takes. I hope I have what it takes to be something but I know it's not an actress. You know what I'm thinking about?
 JOHNNY. What?
 FRANKIE. You won't laugh?
 JOHNNY. Of course not.
 FRANKIE. I can't. It's too . . . I'll tell you later. I can't now.
 JOHNNY. Okay. I'll tell you one thing. You didn't miss much not graduating high school. I had almost two years of college. We both ended up working for a couple of crazed Greeks. (*He imitates their boss.*) "Cheeseburger, cheeseburger" is right.
 FRANKIE. That was very good.
 JOHNNY. Thank you.
 FRANKIE. A teacher.
 JOHNNY. Huh?
 FRANKIE. What I'm thinking of becoming.
 JOHNNY. Why would I laugh at that?
 FRANKIE. I don't know. It just seems funny. Someone who can't spell "cat" teaching little kids to. I'll have to go back to school and learn before I can teach them but . . . I don't know, it sounds nice. (*She hasn't stopped watching Johnny work with the eggs.*) Aren't you going to scramble them?
 JOHNNY. It's better if you just let them set.
 FRANKIE. In the restaurant, I've seen you beat 'em. That's when I noticed you had sexy wrists.
 JOHNNY. That's in the restaurant: I'm in a hurry. These are my special eggs for you. (*He starts cleaning up while the eggs set in a skillet on the stove top.*)
 FRANKIE. You don't have to do that.
 JOHNNY. I know.
 FRANKIE. Suit yourself.

JOHNNY. I bet I know what you're thinking: "He's too good to be true."
 FRANKIE. Is that what you want me to think?
 JOHNNY. Face it, Frankie, men like me do not grow on trees. Hell, *people* like me don't. (*He holds his wet hands out to her.*) Towel? (*Frankie picks up a dish towel on the counter and begins to dry his hands for him.*) So you think I have sexy wrists?
 FRANKIE. I don't think you're gonna break into movies on 'em.
 JOHNNY. What do you think is sexy about them?
 FRANKIE. I don't know. The shape. The hairs. That vein there. What's that?
 JOHNNY. A mole.
 FRANKIE. I could live without that.
 JOHNNY. First thing Monday morning, it comes off. (*He is kissing her hands. Frankie lets him but keeps a certain distance, too.*)
 FRANKIE. Are you keeping some big secret from me?
 JOHNNY. It's more like I'm keeping several thousand little ones.
 FRANKIE. I'd appreciate a straight answer.
 JOHNNY. No, I'm not married.
 FRANKIE. Men always think that's the only question women want to ask.
 JOHNNY. So fire away.
 FRANKIE. Well were you?
 JOHNNY. I was.
 FRANKIE. How many times?
 JOHNNY. Once. Is that it?
 FRANKIE. Men have other secrets than being married. You could be a mass murderer or an ex-convict.
 JOHNNY. I am. I spent two years in the slammer. Forgery.
 FRANKIE. That's okay.
 JOHNNY. The state of New Jersey didn't seem to think so.
 FRANKIE. It's no skin off my nose.
 JOHNNY. Anything else?
 FRANKIE. You could be gay.
 JOHNNY. Get real, Frankie.
 FRANKIE. Well you could!

JOHNNY. Does this look like a gay face?
FRANKIE. You could have a drug problem or a drinking one.

JOHNNY. All right, I did.

FRANKIE. Which one?

JOHNNY. Booze.

FRANKIE. There, you see?

JOHNNY. It's under control now.

FRANKIE. You could still be a real shit underneath all that.

JOHNNY. But I'm not.

FRANKIE. That's your opinion.

JOHNNY. You just want a guarantee we're going to live happily ever after.

FRANKIE. Jesus God knows, I want something. If I was put on this planet to haul hamburgers and french fries to pay the rent on an apartment I don't even like in the vague hope that some stranger will not find me wanting enough not to want to marry me then I think my being born is an experience that is going to be equaled in meaninglessness only by my being dead. I got a whole life ahead of me to feel like this? Excuse me, who do I thank for all this? I think the eggs are ready.

JOHNNY. Everything you said, anybody could say. I could give it back to you in spades. You didn't invent negativity.

FRANKIE. I didn't have to.

JOHNNY. And you didn't discover despair. I was there a long time before you ever heard of it.

FRANKIE. The eggs are burning.

JOHNNY. Fuck the eggs! This is more important!

FRANKIE. I'm hungry! (Frankie has gone to the stove to take the eggs off. Johnny grabs her from behind and pulls her towards him.)

JOHNNY. What's the matter with you?

FRANKIE. Let go of me!

JOHNNY. Look at me! (They struggle briefly. Frankie shoves Johnny who backs into the hot skillet and burns his back.)

Aaaaaaa

FRANKIE. What's the matter —?

JOHNNY. Oooooooooooooo

FRANKIE. What happened —?

JOHNNY. Owl Owl Owl Owl Owl Owl Owl

FRANKIE. Oh my God!

JOHNNY. Oooo Oooo Oooo Oooo Oooo Oooooo

FRANKIE. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to —!

JOHNNY. Jesus, Frankie, Jesus Christ!

FRANKIE. Tell me what to do!

JOHNNY. Get something!

FRANKIE. What?

JOHNNY. Ice.

FRANKIE. Ice for burns? Don't move. (Frankie puts the entire tray of ice cubes on Johnny's back. The scream that ensues is greater than the first one.)

JOHNNY. AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

FRANKIE. You said to —! (Johnny nods vigorously.) Should I keep it on? (Johnny nods again, only this time he bites his fingers to keep from crying out.) We'd be a terrific couple. One of us would be dead by the end of the first week. One date practically did it. All I asked you to do was turn off the eggs but not everything has to be a big deal with you. I would have made the world's worst nurse.

JOHNNY. (Between gasps of pain.) Butter.

FRANKIE. What?

JOHNNY. Put some butter on it.

FRANKIE. Butter's bad on burns.

JOHNNY. I don't care.

FRANKIE. I may have some . . . oh what-do-you-call-it-when-you-have-a-sunburn, it comes in a squat blue bottle?

JOHNNY. Noxzema

FRANKIE. That's it!

JOHNNY. It breaks me out. Get the butter.

FRANKIE. It's margarine.

JOHNNY. I don't care. (Frankie gets the margarine out of the refrigerator.)

FRANKIE. It sounds like you got a lot of allergies.

JOHNNY. Just those three.

FRANKIE. Catsup, Noxzema and . . . what was the other one?

JOHNNY. Fresh peaches. Canned are okay. (Frankie puts the margarine on Johnny's back.) Oooooooooooooo

FRANKIE. Does that feel good?

JOHNNY. You have no idea.

FRANKIE. More?

JOHNNY. Yes, more. Don't stop.
 FRANKIE. You're gonna smell like a . . . whatever a person covered in margarine smells like.
 JOHNNY. I don't care.
 FRANKIE. To tell the truth, it doesn't look all that bad.
 JOHNNY. You think I'm faking this?
 FRANKIE. I didn't say that.
 JOHNNY. What do you want? Permanent scars? (Pause. *Frankie puts more margarine on Johnny's back.*)
 FRANKIE. Did your first wife do this for you?
 JOHNNY. Only wife. I told you that.
 FRANKIE. Okay, so I was fishing.
 JOHNNY. No, checking. Were you married?
 FRANKIE. No, never.
 JOHNNY. Anyone serious?
 FRANKIE. Try "terminal."
 JOHNNY. What happened?
 FRANKIE. He got more serious with who I thought was my best friend.
 JOHNNY. The same thing happened to me.
 FRANKIE. You know what the main thing I felt was? Dumb.
 JOHNNY. I know, I know!
 FRANKIE. I even introduced them. I lent them money. Money from my credit union. I gave her my old television. A perfectly good Zenith. They're probably watching Charles Bronson together at this very moment. I hope it explodes and blows their faces off. No, I don't. I hope it blows up and the fumes kill them. Aren't there suppose to be poison gases in a television set?
 JOHNNY. I wouldn't be surprised.
 FRANKIE. That or he's telling her she looks like shit, who told her she could change her hair or where's his car keys or shut the fuck up, he's had a rough day. I didn't know how exhausting unemployment could be. God, why do we get involved with people it turns out hate us?
 JOHNNY. Because. . .
 FRANKIE. . . we hate ourselves. I know. I read the same book.
 JOHNNY. How long has it been?

FRANKIE. Seven years. (*Johnny lets out a long stream of air.*)
 What? You, too? (*Johnny nods.*) Any kids?
 JOHNNY. Two.
 FRANKIE. You see them?
 JOHNNY. Not as much as I'd like. She's remarried. They live in Maine in a beautiful house overlooking the sea.
 FRANKIE. I bet it's not so beautiful.
 JOHNNY. It's beautiful. I could never have provided them with anything like that. The first time I saw it, I couldn't get out of the car. I felt so ashamed. So forgotten. The kids came running out of the house. They looked so happy to see me but I couldn't feel happy back. All of a sudden, they looked like somebody's else's kids. I couldn't even roll down the window. "What's the matter, daddy?" I started crying. I couldn't stop. Sheila and her husband had to come out of the house to get me to come in. You know what I wanted to do? Run that crewcut asshole insurance salesman over and drive off with the three of them. I don't know where we would've gone. We'd probably still be driving.
 FRANKIE. That would've been a dumb thing to do.
 JOHNNY. I never said I was smart.
 FRANKIE. I'll tell you a secret: you are.
 JOHNNY. I said I was passionate. I don't let go of old things easy and I grab new things hard.
 FRANKIE. Too hard.
 JOHNNY. There's no such thing as too hard when you want something.
 FRANKIE. Yes, there is, Johnny. The other person. (*There is a pause. Frankie has stopped working on Johnny's back. Instead she just stares at it. Johnny looks straight ahead. The music has changed to the Shostakovich Second String Quartet.*)*
 JOHNNY. What are you doing back there?
 FRANKIE. Nothing. You want more butter or ice or something? (*Johnny shakes his head.*)
 JOHNNY. It's funny how you can talk to people better sometimes when you're not looking at them. You're right there. (*He points straight ahead.*) Clear as day.

*See Special Note on copyright page.

FRANKIE. I bet no one ever said this was the most beautiful music ever written.

JOHNNY. I don't mind.

FRANKIE. I don't know what the radio was doing on that station in the first place. That's not my kind of music. But I could tell you were enjoying it and I guess I wanted you to think I had higher taste than I really do.

JOHNNY. So did I.

FRANKIE. I liked what he played for us though, but he didn't say its name.

JOHNNY. Maybe it doesn't need one. You just walk into a fancy record shop and ask for the most beautiful music ever written and that's what they hand you.

FRANKIE. Not if I was the salesperson. You'd get "Michelle" or "Eleanor Rigby" or "Lucy In the Sky With Diamonds." Something by the Beatles. I sort of lost interest in pop music when they stopped singing.

JOHNNY. The last record I bought was the Simon and Garfunkel Reunion in Central Park. It wasn't the same. You could tell they'd been separated.

FRANKIE. Sometimes I feel like it's still the Sixties. Or that they were ten or fifteen years ago, not twenty or twenty-five. I lost ten years of my life somewhere. I went to Bruce Springsteen last year and I was the oldest one there.

JOHNNY. Put your arms around me. (*Frankie puts her arms over Johnny's shoulders.*) Tighter. (*Frankie's hands begin to stroke Johnny's chest and stomach.*) Do you like doing that?

FRANKIE. I don't mind.

JOHNNY. We touch our own bodies there and nothing happens. Something to do with electrons. We short-circuit ourselves. Stroke my tits. There! (*He tilts his head back until he is looking up at her.*) Give me your mouth. (*Frankie bends over and kisses him. It is a long one.*) That tongue. Those lips. (*He pulls her down towards him for another long kiss.*) I want to die like this. Drown.

FRANKIE. What do you want from me?

JOHNNY. Everything. Your heart. Your soul. Your tits. Your mouth. Your fucking guts. I want it all. I want to be inside you. Don't hold back.

FRANKIE. I'm not holding back.

JOHNNY. Let go. I'll catch you.

FRANKIE. I'm right here.

JOHNNY. I want more. I need more.

FRANKIE. If I'd known what playing with your tit was gonna turn into—

JOHNNY. Quit screwing with me, Frankie.

FRANKIE. You got a pretty weird notion of who's screwing with who. I said I liked you. I told you that. I'm perfectly ready to make love to you. Why do you have to start a big discussion about it. It's not like I am saying "no."

JOHNNY. I want you to do something.

FRANKIE. What?

JOHNNY. I want you to go down on me.

FRANKIE. No.

JOHNNY. I went down on you.

FRANKIE. That was different.

JOHNNY. How?

FRANKIE. That was then.

JOHNNY. Please.

FRANKIE. I'm not good at it.

JOHNNY. Hey, this isn't a contest. We're talking about making love.

FRANKIE. I don't want to right now.

JOHNNY. You want me to go down on you again?

FRANKIE. If I do it will you shut up about all this other stuff?

JOHNNY. You know I won't.

FRANKIE. Then go down on yourself.

JOHNNY. What happened? You were gonna do it.

FRANKIE. Anything to get you to quit picking at me. Go on, get out of here. Get somebody else to go down on you.

JOHNNY. I don't want somebody else to go down on me.

FRANKIE. Jesus! I just had a vision of what it's going to be like at work Monday after this! I'm not quitting my job. I was there first.

JOHNNY. What are you talking about?

FRANKIE. I don't think we're looking for the same thing.

JOHNNY. We are. Only I've found it and you've given up.

FRANKIE. Yes! Long before the sun ever rose on your ugly face.

JOHNNY. What scares you more? Marriage or kids?
 FRANKIE. I'm not scared. And I told you: I can't have any.
 JOHNNY. I told you: we can adopt.
 FRANKIE. I don't love you.
 JOHNNY. That wasn't the question.
 FRANKIE. You hear what you want to hear.
 JOHNNY. Do you know anybody who doesn't?
 FRANKIE. Not all the time.
 JOHNNY. You're only telling me you don't love me so you don't have to find out if you could. Just because you've given up on the possibility, I'm not going to let you drag me down with you. You're coming up to my level if I have to pull you by the hair.
 FRANKIE. I'm not going anywhere with a man who for all his bullshit about marriage and kids and Shakespeare. . . .
 JOHNNY. It's not bullshit!
 FRANKIE. . . . Just wants me to go down on him.
 JOHNNY. Pretend it was a metaphor.
 FRANKIE. Fuck you it was a metaphor! It was a blowjob. What's a metaphor?
 JOHNNY. Something that stands for something else.
 FRANKIE. I was right the first time. A blowjob.
 JOHNNY. A sensual metaphor for mutual acceptance.
 FRANKIE. Fuck you. Besides, what's mutual about a blowjob?
 JOHNNY. I made that up. I'm sorry. It wasn't a metaphor. It was just something I wanted us to do.
 FRANKIE. And I didn't.
 JOHNNY. Let go, will you! One lousy little peccadillo and it's off with his head!
 FRANKIE. Stop using words I don't know. What's a peccadillo?
 JOHNNY. A blowjob! Notice I haven't died you didn't do it! FRANKIE. I noticed.
 JOHNNY. And let me notice something for you: you wouldn't have died if you had. Thanks for making me feel about this big. (*He gets up and starts gathering and putting on his clothes.*) I'm sorry, I mistook you for a kindred spirit. Kindred: two of a kind, sharing a great affinity.
 FRANKIE. I know what kindred means!

JOHNNY. Shall we go for affinity?
 FRANKIE. That's the first really rotten thing you've said all night. Somebody who would make fun of somebody else's intelligence, no worse, their education or lack of—that is somebody I would be very glad not to know. I thought you were weird, Johnny. I thought you were sad. I didn't think you were cruel.
 JOHNNY. I'm sorry.
 FRANKIE. It's a cruelty just waiting to happen again and I don't want to be there when it does.
 JOHNNY. Pleased (*There is an urgency in his voice that startles Frankie.*) I'm not good with people. But I want to be. I can get away with it for long stretches but I always hang myself in the end.
 FRANKIE. Hey, c'm'on, don't cry. Please, don't cry.
 JOHNNY. It's not cruelty. It's a feeling I don't matter. That nobody hears me. I'm drowning. I'm trying to swim back to shore but there's this tremendous undertow and I'm not getting anywhere. My arms and legs are going a mile a minute but they aren't taking me any closer to where I want to be.
 FRANKIE. Where's that?
 JOHNNY. With you.
 FRANKIE. You don't know me.
 JOHNNY. Yes, I do. It scares people how much we really know one another, so we pretend we don't. You know me. You've known me all your life. Only now I'm here. Take me. Use me. Try me. There's a reason we're called Frankie and Johnny.
 FRANKIE. There's a million other Frankies out there and a billion other Johnnys. The world is filled with Frankies and Johnnys and Jacks and Jills.
 JOHNNY. But only one this Johnny, one this Frankie.
 FRANKIE. We're too different.
 JOHNNY. You say po-tah-toes? All right, I'll say po-tah-toes! I don't care. I love you. I want to marry you.
 FRANKIE. I don't say po-tah-toes. Who the hell says po-tah-toes?
 JOHNNY. Are you listening to me?
 FRANKIE. I'm trying very hard not to!

JOHNNY. That's your trouble. You don't want to hear anything you don't think you already know. Well I'll tell you something, Cinderella: Your Prince Charming has come. Wake up before another thousand years go by! Don't throw me away like a gum wrapper because you think there's something about me you may not like. I have what it takes to give you anything and everything you want. Maybe not up here . . . (He taps his head.) . . . or here . . . (He slaps his hip where he wears his wallet.) . . . but here. And that would please me enormously. All I ask back is that you use your capacity to be everyone and everything for me. It's within you. If we could do that for each other we'd give our kids the universe. They'd be Shakespeare and the most beautiful music ever written and a saint maybe or a champion athlete or a president all rolled into one. Terrific kids! How could they not be? We have a chance to make everything turn out all right again. Turn our back on everything that went wrong. We can begin right now and all over again but only if we begin right now, this minute, this room and us. I know this thing, Frankie.

FRANKIE. I want to show you something, Johnny. (She pushes her hair back.) He did that. The man I told you about. With a belt buckle. (Johnny kisses the scar.)

JOHNNY. It's gone now.

FRANKIE. It'll never go.

JOHNNY. It's gone. I made it go.

FRANKIE. What are you? My guardian angel?

JOHNNY. It seems to me the right people are our guardian angels.

FRANKIE. I wanted things, too, you know.

JOHNNY. I know.

FRANKIE. A man, a family, kids . . . He's the reason I can't have any.

JOHNNY. He's gone. Choose me. Hurry up. It's getting light out. I turn into a pumpkin.

FRANKIE. (Looking towards the window.) It is getting light out! (Frankie goes to the window.)

JOHNNY. You are so beautiful standing there.

FRANKIE. The only time I saw the sun come up with a guy was my senior prom. (Johnny has joined her at the window. As

they stand there looking out, we will be aware of the rising sun.) His name was Johnny Di Corso but everyone called him Skunk. (She takes Johnny's hand and clasps it to her but her eyes stay looking out the window at the dawn.) He was a head shorter than me and wasn't much to look at but nobody else had asked me. It was him or else. I was dreading it. But guess what? That boy could dancel You should have seen us. We were the stars of the prom. We did Lindys, the mambo, the Twist. The Monkey, the Frug. All the fast dances. Everybody's mouth was down to here. Afterwards we went out to the lake to watch the sun come up. He told me he was going to be on American Bandstand one day. I wonder if he ever made it. (Johnny puts his arm around her and begins to move her in a slow dance step.)

JOHNNY. There must be something about you and sunrises and men called Johnny.

FRANKIE. You got a nickname?

JOHNNY. No. You got to be really popular or really unpopular to have a nickname.

FRANKIE. I'll give you a nickname. (They dance in silence a while. Silence, that is, except for the Shostakovich* which they pay no attention to.) You're not going to like me saying this but you're a terrible dancer.

JOHNNY. Show me.

FRANKIE. Like that.

JOHNNY. There?

FRANKIE. That's better.

JOHNNY. You're going to make a wonderful teacher. (He starts to hum.)

FRANKIE. What's that supposed to be?

JOHNNY. Something from *Brigadoon*.

FRANKIE. That isn't from *Brigadoon*. That isn't even remotely from *Brigadoon*. That isn't even remotely something from anything. (They dance. Frankie begins to hum.) That's something from *Brigadoon*. You can't have kids in a place this size.

JOHNNY. Who says?

*See Special Note on copyright page.

FRANKIE. How big is your place?
JOHNNY. Even smaller. We'll be a nice snug family. It'll be wonderful.

FRANKIE. Does it always get light so fast this time of year?
JOHNNY. Unh-unh. The sun's in a hurry to shine on us.

FRANKIE. Pardon my French but that's bullshit.

JOHNNY. You can sleep all day today.

FRANKIE. What are you planning to do?
JOHNNY. Watch you.

FRANKIE. You're just weird enough to do it, too. Well forget it. I can't sleep with people watching me.

JOHNNY. How do you know?
FRANKIE. I was in the hospital for my gall bladder and I had a roommate who just stared at me all the time. I made them move me. I got a private room for the price of a semi. Is this the sort of stuff you look forward to finding out about me?

JOHNNY. Unh-hunh!
FRANKIE. You're nuts.

JOHNNY. I'm happy!

FRANKIE. Where are you taking me?
JOHNNY. The moon.

FRANKIE. That old place again?
JOHNNY. The other side this time. *(Johnny has slow-danced Frankie to the bed. The room is being quickly flooded with sunlight.)*

FRANKIE. If you don't turn into a pumpkin, what do you turn into?

JOHNNY. You tell me. *(He kisses her very gently.)*

FRANKIE. Just a minute. *(She gets up and moves quickly to the bathroom. Johnny turns off all the room lights. He starts to close the blinds but instead raises them even higher. Sunlight pours across him. The Shostakovich ends.* Johnny moves quickly to the radio and turns up the volume as the announcer's voice is heard.)*

RADIO ANNOUNCER. . . . that just about winds up my stint in the control room. This has been Music Till Dawn with Marlon. I'm still thinking about Frankie and Johnny.

*See Special Note on copyright page.

God, how I wish you two really existed. Maybe I'm crazy but I'd still like to believe in love. Why the hell do you think I work these hours? Anyway, you two moonbeams, whoever, wherever you are, here's an encore. *(Debussy's "Clair de Lune" is heard again.* Johnny sits, listening. He starts to cry he is so happy. He turns as Frankie comes out of the bathroom. She is brushing her teeth.)*

JOHNNY. They're playing our song again.

FRANKIE. Did they say what it was this time?

JOHNNY. I told you! You just walk into a record shop and ask for the most beautiful music . . .

FRANKIE. Watch us end up with something from *The Sound of Music*, you'll see! You want to brush? *(She motions with her thumb to the bathroom. She steps aside as Johnny passes her to go in.)* Don't worry. It's never been used. *(Still brushing her teeth she goes to the window and looks out.)* Did you see the robins? *(She listens to the music.)* This I can see why people call pretty. *(She sits on the bed, listens and continues to brush her teeth. A little gasp of pleasure escapes her.)* Mmmmm! *(Johnny comes out of the bathroom. He is brushing his teeth.)*

JOHNNY. I'm not going to ask whose robe that is.

FRANKIE. Sshh! *(She is really listening to the music.)*

JOHNNY. We should get something with fluoride.

FRANKIE. Sshh!

JOHNNY. Anti-tartar build-up, too.

FRANKIE. Johnny! *(Johnny sits next to her on the bed. They are both brushing their teeth and listening to the music. They continue to brush their teeth and listen to the Debussy. The lights are fading.)*

END OF THE PLAY

*See Special Note on copyright page.